

# STUDIES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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# ANALYTICAL TABLE OF THE CONTENTS OF VOLUME TWO

## PART III

### QUESTIONS WHICH CONCERN THE *CONCEPT* OF RELIGION—*continued*

#### CHAPTER XV

	PAGE
THE SELF-CRITICISM OF RELIGION IN THE DEFINING OF ITS RELATIONS TO THE IMPERSONAL . . . . .	1
Where mysticism, as an interpretation of the religious con- sciousness, breaks down . . . . .	1
The movement towards the impersonal . . . . .	2
The problem before us : the place of the impersonal in the religious view of life . . . . .	6
The impersonal aspect of ritual and cult . . . . .	8
As illustrated in the history of Hebrew religion : the impersonal supplants the directness of personal com- munion, and assumes a legalistic form . . . . .	10
As illustrated in the history of Greek religion and of Greek philosophical thought : was tantamount to the establish- ment of a secular, as opposed to a religious, view of nature and of human life . . . . .	22
One main difference between the Greek and the Hebrew way of depersonalizing religion . . . . .	28
The movement towards the impersonal further illustrated in Confucianism . . . . .	30
The significance for religion of the impersonal point of view	35

#### CHAPTER XVI

THE SELF-CRITICISM OF RELIGION IN THE DEFINING OF ITS RELATIONS TO THE SECULAR . . . . .	39
The retreat of religion in face of the secularist attitude . . . . .	39
Must religion be all or nothing ? . . . . .	41
The development of the secular attitude to nature : if God is to be treated as God, nature must be treated as nature . . . . .	43

# ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
The rejection of polytheism a stage in the secularization of nature . . . . .	46
The development of the secular attitude to man : if God is to be thought of as God, man must be thought of as man . .	51
The Gnostic personification and divinization of the abstractions of reason : a real knowledge of God demands that nature be put and kept in her place . . . . .	52
Does this discovery of the secular in nature and in man spell self-destruction for religion . . . . .	57
Man's deepening conception of ' life ' leads to a deepening sense of his finitude, and thereby to a more adequate apprehension of the infinite and unconditioned in the religious sense . . . . .	60
The secular side of the antithesis . . . . .	63
The finite and the infinite . the conditioned and the unconditioned . . . . .	64
The kinds of conditionedness : the formal and the ontological conditions of human life . . . . .	65
What it means to be a conditioned self . . . . .	68
Conclusion . . . . .	70

## CHAPTER XVII

THE SELF-CRITICISM OF RELIGION IN THE DEFINING OF ITS RELATIONS TO MORALITY . . . . .	72
Science and morality as substitutes for religion . . . . .	72
The autonomy of science implies another autonomy more fundamental than its own . . . . .	73
How far is morality autonomous . . . . .	74
Two fundamental types of ethical theory, the naturalistic and the idealistic . . . . .	75
The idealistic view . . . . .	79
Its beginnings in Greek philosophy . . . . .	80
The idealistic view in present-day theory . . . . .	85
What must be understood by the word ' motive ' . . . . .	86
Motives not independent sources of ethical value . . . . .	89
Two principles converging on one comprehensive conclusion . . . . .	91
Morality a condition of personal existence . . . . .	95
The relationship between morality and religion . . . . .	97
What justifies the claim of morality to an autonomous position . . . . .	99
The moral <i>sanctions</i> , having their source in the conditions of personal existence, coincide with those of religion . . . .	101
Human personality to be understood only in the context of its relations to the supernatural . . . . .	102
The problem of sanctions to be excluded from the province of ethics . . . . .	105

# ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

## *Appendix to Chapter XVII*

	PAGE
THE NATURALISTIC TYPES OF ETHICAL THEORY . . . . .	107
Hedonism and utilitarianism . . . . .	107
The strength of the hedonist position . . . . .	108
Difficulties which hedonism has to meet . . . . .	111
The defects of hedonism . . . . .	113
The naturalistic analysis of desire, and the consequent interpretation of morals . . . . .	117
The hedonist fails to account for the type of judgment that enters into desire . . . . .	121
The hedonist is also faced by another predicament . . . . .	123
Two courses open to the hedonist . . . . .	124

## CHAPTER XVIII

CHRISTIANITY AND THE COMPLETED CONCEPT OF RELIGION	125
The completed concept of religion : review of the conclusions thus far reached . . . . .	125
The profoundly necessary, yet dangerous, character of the secularist attitudes, and of the techniques and organizations in which they have come to be embodied . . . . .	128
The natural processes of ' evolution ' and ' sublimation ' as contrasted with religious transformation in ' second birth ' . . . . .	135
Further discussion of the relation between morality and religion . . . . .	137
How the non-religious man can yet be genuinely moral ; how the attempts to obtain sanctions for morality apart from religion affect his moral standing . . . . .	139
Moral delinquencies in the genuinely religious . . . . .	144
The one condition upon which sin is compatible with the state of salvation . . . . .	145
The difference between religion and morality . . . . .	148
The ' once-born ' and the ' twice-born ' religions . . . . .	150
An indispensable fifth factor in the completed concept of religion : the postulate that a Being exists to which the finite subject can relate his personality as a whole . . . . .	152
What this Being must be in view of the way in which religion vindicates its regenerating power . . . . .	154
No religion can live on its ideals alone ; it is the ideal factor upon which the strain falls . . . . .	156
Whether, and in what terms, the nature of the unconditioned Being allows of being defined by us . . . . .	159
The completed concept of religion in its relation to Christianity . . . . .	163

The completed concept of religion in its relation to religion's own requirement of a secular attitude to the things of the world . . . . .	165
Religion requires us to take an introverted view of nature ; and in doing so it brings us to the problems that concern not only the concept of religion, but the validity of the concept . . . . .	168

## PART IV

THE QUESTIONS WHICH BEAR ON THE  
*VALIDITY* OF RELIGION

## CHAPTER XIX

NATURE AND THE CONCEPT OF EXISTENCE . . . . .	173
The factors common to the physical and the biological views of nature . . . . .	173
The mutual implication of existence and permanence in Greek thought . . . . .	176
Natural relations are fraught with a meaning other than that of mere co-existence and sequence . . . . .	180
In virtue of these relations, identity is compatible with change of state, and the activist views which underlie the whole structure of language are so far justified . . . . .	184
The 'subject' of change, however, has in physical science to be conceived not as substance but as system, and the self-identity of system from the purely formal standpoint of systematic order . . . . .	187
The methodological advantages of this procedure, and the justification for it . . . . .	191
Why the counter-view which treats change as more fundamental in nature than permanence has had to be rejected . . . . .	192
The postulate of permanence and its implications . . . . .	195
Nature, in so far as it is the subject-matter of physics, is the system of all movements in their variable relations . . . . .	198
The scientific way of regarding the fundamental phenomenon of nature, <i>viz</i> motion . . . . .	199
The newer views of the relation of time to space . . . . .	201
Further features characteristic of the new physical view of nature . . . . .	203
Implications and consequences of this view of nature . . . . .	204

# ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER XX

	PAGE
THE NATURE OF EXPERIENCE AND THE ERRORS OF EMPIRICISM	208
The nature of 'experience' . . . . .	208
Oneness of the object in successive and differing experiences	212
The common-sense view . . . . .	213
The vindication of common sense against phenomenalism .	218
Summary of the preceding argument . . . . .	221
The common-sense views of 'experience' . . . . .	222
The meaning of 'data' of experience: 'sensa' not absolutely given . . . . .	226
'Instinct', not 'sensa', the elemental thing in experience .	229
'Data' the products of a 'first stabilization' . . . . .	231
The world of this 'first stabilization' at once a vantage-ground and an enigma, with the consequence that there emerge the secular and religious points of view . . . . .	232
A further analysis of experience: it involves more than consciousness of objects . . . . .	234
The transition from the common-sense to the scientific standpoint . . . . .	236
Knowledge of existence: the false assumption that it is exclusively inferential . . . . .	238
Consciousness to be defined in terms of experience, not experience in terms of consciousness . . . . .	242

## CHAPTER XXI

EXPERIENCE, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND ACTIVITY . . . . .	245
Conclusions reached in the argument of the two preceding chapters . . . . .	245
Activism <i>versus</i> phenomenalism: what is implied in being a subject over and above what it is to have an object . . . . .	248
The denial of consciousness in naturalistic phenomenalism .	250
The alternative naturalistic view: consciousness to be treated like any datum of experience, and not as implying the existence of a personal self . . . . .	253
Whether the concept of activity can be extended to other than conscious beings . . . . .	258
The fundamental cleavage in the experience of action: the connection <i>in experience</i> of the two aspects . . . . .	263
The consequent assumption on which the whole conscious life is based; that one and the same thing reports itself to me directly as my own activity and indirectly as an observable change in space-time . . . . .	266
A further all-important question: Do <i>things</i> move in the activist sense of the term 'move'? . . . . .	267

## ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
The distinction between facts and modes of experience . . . . .	267
The application of the distinction, in answer to the question whether activity can be ascribed to other than conscious beings . . . . .	269

## CHAPTER XXII

EXPERIENCE, EXISTENCE AND SELFHOOD . . . . .	270
The distinction between modes and facts of experience in its application to the question of existence . . . . .	270
The standpoint of physics; its phenomenalist interpretation of nature implies an ultra-phenomenalist interpretation of the fact that nature exists . . . . .	272
The existents to which we attribute appearances cannot be simple . . . . .	273
The complex existent must be more than merely a ' term ' : it must be in some sense a self . . . . .	276
The standpoint of biological science . its existents have a complex inner nature . . . . .	277
The mechanistic view of the organism . . . . .	278
The view, in naturalistic terms, of the organism as a complex unit, not resolvable into simple units; the very significant changes which it introduces into the theory of relations . . . . .	283
Here the existent unit has been given the complexity of a self: its relations are ' for ' itself . . . . .	285
The empirical basis of the non-mechanistic view: we experience organisms as selves . . . . .	289
The grounds of the distinction between nature in its pheno- menalist aspect and in its aspect as a system of selves . . . . .	292
Why biology must none the less remain naturalistic in method and standpoint . . . . .	295
The vitalist, non-naturalistic, view of the organism . . . . .	296
Life as an <i>observable</i> phenomenon of nature . . . . .	297
Life as the <i>actual experience</i> of being alive: <i>i.e.</i> not as a fact but as a mode of experience . . . . .	300
Objections to the view that there is actual <i>modal</i> experience of being alive . . . . .	300
The force of the objections: the need for defining more precisely the character of modal experience . . . . .	301
Unconscious states can be given as a mode of experience . . . . .	303
Transition from unconsciousness to consciousness . . . . .	305
The unity of the self is sustained alike by our conscious and by our unconscious states . . . . .	307
The reverse transition, from consciousness to unconsciousness . . . . .	309
Life as an actual mode of experience is what is common to the two types of alternating states . . . . .	311

## ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
The religious attitude to the two states . . . . .	312
Whether there is still a sense in which experience should be ascribed to inanimate things . . . . .	314
The difference between the relation of a subject to objects and its relation to other subjects ; the confounding of the two relations at the bottom of every error in religious thinking and in the religious life . . . . .	317
The distinction between object-selves and subject-selves . . . . .	320
Object-selves and object-events . . . . .	321

## CHAPTER XXIII

THE INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE . . . . .	329
Recapitulation of the preceding argument . . . . .	329
The problem of religion, in its distinction from the problem of natural knowledge . . . . .	330
Introversion on the animistic and on the theistic level . . . . .	331
The two forms of the introverted view of life : life as episodic and as comprehensive . . . . .	335
Religion is preoccupation with life in the 'comprehensive' sense, <i>i.e.</i> it is the experience of what experience means . . . . .	338
The experience of experience is <i>not</i> equivalent to 'self- consciousness' . . . . .	339
The individual's experience of his own past and future experiences is a <i>mode</i> of present experience . . . . .	343
The bearing of these conclusions on the conception of an introverted view of life . . . . .	346

## CHAPTER XXIV

WHAT RELIGION ADDS TO THE INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE . . . . .	348
Religion reveals meanings which without the offices of religion could never become the meanings of actual experience. What religion offers is the life eternal. The function of religion is to turn our experience of life into an experience of the life eternal . . . . .	348
'Life' in the religious sense . . . . .	352
Further consideration of the 'specious present' . . . . .	353
The duration of a 'specious present' determined by the time required for a single well-defined act of adjustment to environment . . . . .	355
Each 'specious present' is therefore an episode in the experience of a self . . . . .	356
Experience of selfhood an experience into which the self enters twice, as the self-adjusting and the self-adjusted . . . . .	357

# ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
The experiences of selfhood are episodes in which the self corrects and epitomizes a well-defined series of reactions .	359
Life as a whole not experienced as episodes are . . .	361
The relation of 'life as Bios' to 'life as Zoé' . . .	362
Organization a phenomenon of life, not life of organization ; death not an effect of dissolution of the body . . .	368
Senescence a phenomenon of life, not of death . . .	372
Again the question : Is the death of the body the end of life .	375
Again the question : Can there be a comprehensive experience of life as a whole . . . . .	378
Whether the conditions of the existence of personality are all external . . . . .	380
The sources to which we must look for an answer . . .	381

## CHAPTER XXV

THE INTROVERTED VIEW OF NATURE . . . . .	384
Difficulties in the way of conceiving the Author of nature as a person . . . . .	384
Dualism in its rationalist form : phenomenism in its empiricist form . . . . .	386
Both take the 'cinematographic' view of experience, and relate God to nature mechanically . . . . .	388
The alternative view of experience, as the experience of being persons : here must lie the revelation of God . .	389
Certain definitory characteristics of personality . . .	390
The four possible personal attitudes . . . . .	391
God's personality as <i>experienced</i> by us . . . . .	393
Our right to believe in the existence of God . . . . .	394
The argument from the relation of subjects to objects .	395
The argument from the relation of subjects to subjects .	399
Objections to the argument as thus stated . . . . .	401
A preliminary reply to objections . . . . .	403
A reply based on a final analysis of experience . . .	404
The objectivity of experience conditioned by the plurality and sociality of experiencing selves . . . . .	406
The fact that the world not only exists but is in at least some degree experienced make <i>appearances</i> possible . .	408
Reality to be thought in terms of the ideally complete system of all its functional appearances : its existence is <i>experience</i> revealing one of its meanings . . . . .	409
All human experience defines itself within the framework of an ideally universal experience : <i>i.e.</i> human experience is an <i>experience</i> of the whole . . . . .	412
Recapitulation, leading to a restatement of the problem .	414
The twofold character of experience . . . . .	416

# ANALYTICAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
The whole logic of the position points not only to a universal experience but to a universal subject creative of its experience . . . . .	417
The dogma of non-creation . . . . .	420
Creation is a category of self-experience . . . . .	422
The world the divine creation . . . . .	424
The creation of subject-selves the supreme possibility of <i>divine</i> experience . . . . .	427

## CHAPTER XXVI

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS . . . . .	429
The supreme possibility of <i>human</i> experience, that it can be viewed from the standpoint of the divine experience itself .	429
A sustained act of reverence the supreme objectifier of human experience . . . . .	432
INDEX OF PROPER NAMES . . . . .	435



## CHAPTER XV

### THE SELF-CRITICISM OF RELIGION IN THE DEFINING OF ITS RELATIONS TO THE IMPERSONAL

*Where Mysticism, as an Interpretation of the  
Religious Consciousness, breaks down*

THE criticisms contained in the preceding chapter must not blind us to the profound significance of mysticism as an interpretation of the religious attitude. Mysticism, we may say, is a phenomenon of religion, even if it falls short of what religion demands. It belongs, therefore, to the group of phenomena which, as previously remarked, are to be characterized as adjectival rather than as substantial. In other words, all religion must be mystical, although mysticism is the death of religion.

In making these assertions, we must be understood to mean that religion implies the interior view of nature, but does not permit the interior view, so far at least as the finite subject and human experience are concerned, to universalize itself in an experience of absolute and unconditioned selfhood. For the concept of religion it is necessary that there should be a plurality of selves, one of which at least must be divine (in whatever sense this term is to be understood), while the others are finite and human. The insistence upon selfhood is the great contribution of the Upanishads to the definition of religion ; and the most valuable part of this contribution is to be

found in the approaches to mysticism rather than in the completed doctrine. The reality of selfhood, the postulate of an inner nature at least in some existents, is the indispensable presupposition of a religious view of life. We must add that if religion is to have any meaning, at least some selves must be persons.

The relation between selfhood in general and personality in particular is a subject that must be discussed in due course. But apart from this problem, two things should be clear even now: (1) that whether or not there are selves that are not persons, there are certainly no persons that are not selves; and (2) that the existence of personal selves is as indispensable for religion as is the general admission of selfhood. Where mysticism breaks down as an interpreter of the religious consciousness is in its determination to push the idea of selfhood to the point at which the element of personality entirely disappears. The one without a second may conceivably exist, but it can hardly exist as a person. The absolute subject, the subject which is alone without an object, is neither object nor subject, but the Impersonal as such. To be a person is not merely to exist; it is to be conscious of existing, or at least to be capable of such consciousness. To desire existence is to be a finite person. Not to know or not to desire existence is the exact contrary of what we have discovered to be the basic precondition of religion.

•

*The Movement towards the Impersonal*

This movement in the direction of the impersonal is a feature which Brahmanism shares, though in a

very exceptional degree, with several of the world's greatest religions. Indeed it may be asserted with truth that if we are to judge from the main historical tendency, a highly characteristic phenomenon of religion in its more advanced stages of development is the steady drift towards a more or less impersonal interpretation of existence. It is upon this phenomenon that we must now concentrate our attention in the attempt to complete our concept of religion.

In so doing, we shall so far remain true to the evolutionary standpoint of anthropology. This standpoint has already furnished us with the initial features ; but we have seen that the initial features must be supplemented and perhaps modified by the addition of traits which emerge only in the later phases of our subject. Thus if it is true that religion begins when the desire to live relates itself to the animistic view of nature, and that as a result religion comes to centre upon a judgment which is at once an interpretation and an assessment of existence, it is no less true that the significance of this value-judgment must be read in the light of the latest conclusions of religious thinking. If these conclusions are to the effect that existence can be fully understood only in an impersonal sense, and that the desire for individual and personal existence is no better than a survival of primitive instinct, this fact must be somehow taken into account. In this case it is clear that the later developments are in some sense opposed to the earlier ; and that religion may have to be considered a self-extinguishing, or, if the phrase is preferred, a self-transcending phenomenon. Such phenomena are not uncommon. The development of human institutions frequently assumes the form

of a preparation for their own displacement. We think of wars as waged to end war, of law as intended to render law unnecessary, of morality as leading to an ideal which is beyond good and evil ; and we can just as easily conceive religion as terminating in an order where religion is no longer called for because its presuppositions no longer hold.

In Chapter VI, I ventured a somewhat rough and ready summary of the topics which were bound to emerge from a consideration of religion in its first beginnings. Among these were certain problems arising from the relations of religion to ritual and to morality.<sup>1</sup> At the same time I pointed out the difficulty of isolating these problems. The various phases of religion are so closely implicated with one another that it is almost impossible to deal with any one without encroaching upon all of them.

A particularly striking instance of this is the phase upon which the argument is now entering. The drift towards the impersonal cannot be explained on purely general grounds as a phenomenon of development. It is a phenomenon with several distinct phases. One of these—the extreme metaphysical phase—we have just examined in the case of oriental mysticism. Others are to be found in the topics just mentioned—the ritual and the ethical elements in religion. It might seem as if the mutual implication of these themes would prove a source of embarrassment. As a matter of fact a way has opened up whereby we can correlate the remaining aspects of the subject without undue repetition or confusion. The truth is that the drift towards impersonalism is not merely a characteristic phenomenon of many

<sup>1</sup> Cf. vol. i. pp. 205 *sq.*

religions ; it is the specific phenomenon in the light of which the ethical and ritualistic complications reveal their significance as contributing to the general concept ; and it is as subordinate movements within one all-comprehensive tendency that we shall treat the development both of ritual and of an ethical point of view.

One further word of explanation is necessary. The movement towards the impersonal is, as has been pointed out, a profoundly significant feature of many religions. But we have seen that religion itself, the ideal something of which we are seeking the concept or definition, is not so far to be identified with any one of its historical representatives. Furthermore it is not to be confounded with any combination, synthesis, or generalization based upon historical comparison and scrutiny. The concept of religion does not necessarily stand or fall with the religions of mankind. Its relations to the latter call for careful definition. We cannot say categorically that the two are either relative to, or independent of, one another. If any formula meets the case, it will have in some way to indicate an asymmetrical relation. There is undoubtedly mutual dependence ; but the dependence is not that of perfect reciprocity. Thus the various religions derive their meaning from the idea of religion (not yet fully defined) in a sense in which that idea does not derive its meaning from them. Doubtless if the ideal postulates were nowhere represented even approximately by the historical religions, these postulates would be little better than arbitrary formulae ; but the definitory concept is in no way affected by the varying degrees in which the historical religions give expression to it.

*The Problem before us : the Place of the Impersonal  
in the Religious View of Life*

In the case before us this means that the prevailing growth of the impersonal standpoint must not be assumed to indicate that religion is fundamentally an impersonal affair. So far as we are in a position to judge, the truth seems to be just the opposite. On the other hand, the fact that this tendency has set in so widely and so powerfully is a clear indication of the line which we must follow in the attempt to fix the remaining features of the concept. In a word, the problem before us has become that of determining in what sense and to what extent the personal and impersonal standpoints must be represented in man's finally-amended estimate of the meaning and value of existence.

We shall assume that a certain progress has already been made in the solution of this problem. Whatever advances may be necessary or possible in the direction of an impersonal view, if anything is to remain of the concept of religion, that view cannot be made absolute. For, as we have seen, if God is alone without a second in a universe from which all differences, including that of subject and object, have been thought away, the precondition of all religion is wanting. The extent, therefore, to which the impersonal is admitted in the religious view of life must be determined at least in part by the necessity of leaving man's finite selfhood unimpaired. The concept of religion demands that the impersonal shall not be found to render it impossible that persons should exist.

This proviso, which we have stated as a principle of limitation, and therefore negatively, may, if stated positively, be converted into a principle of guidance and direction. Thus we shall take it for granted that if the concept of religion is to stand, not only must the impersonal be excluded in any sense that would render it impossible to admit the existence of finite persons, but that in so far as it is admitted, it must be so on the ground of what it is able to contribute to the possibilities of such existence.

Our warrant for this conversion of a negative into a positive principle is to be found in the conception that has determined our procedure from the beginning, the conception of development. If religion, as we have assumed, is in its historical aspect a developing phenomenon, then just as we are bound to grant that its later phases may lead to results which are in conflict with its beginnings, so we are compelled to assume that these results are reached by following the selfsame beginnings to the consequences implicit in them. The total concept of which we are in search must be the product of a correct interpretation of the whole process of development. We are therefore compelled to judge the impersonal factor in religion by the extent to which it is seen to sustain, at the highest level of development, the postulates in which religion as a whole has had its origin. In other words, our interpretation of the total developing phenomenon must be determined by our ability to see in its latest phases, and in every phase, an answer, commensurate with the general level of human culture for the time being, to the very questions and longings in response to which

religion first made its appearance as a phenomenon of primitive culture.

*The Impersonal Aspect of Ritual and Cult*

We shall begin with the element of ritual. This element, as we have seen, plays an important part in the process whereby religion emerges in the transition from the instinctive level of experience to the level of judgment. The primitive man's desire to live, although an idealization, and therefore fundamentally different from the natural instinct of self-preservation, is still a crude and undeveloped thing, hardly capable of sustaining the weight of its own ideal implications. In itself it is too close to the instincts, and is in constant danger of giving way before them. This danger persists so long as the reactions in which the desire for life finds expression are, from the very necessities of the case, indistinguishable from the reactions of pure instinct. What is needed is a new system of reactions, not developed, like the impulses of nature, under the immediate pressure of a present stimulus and reflecting in their forms the specific character of the initial stimulus, but showing the influence of judgment, and expressing in their calculated detail the universal and ideal element of thought.

Furthermore, the steadiness and persistence of the desire to live, as contrasted with the occasional character of the instinctive reactions, would naturally seek expression in ritual performances showing a certain regularity both in the times and in the manner of observance. The uniformity and periodicity of nature's processes would be superseded or

supplemented by the regularity of an established convention. It is in this way that man prepares a fitting medium for the expression of his deepest and most sustained desires and aspirations.

Thus from the very first we detect in primitive religion the rudiments of something suggestive of the impersonal. A ritual which has been established and regularized as a cult is a permanent institution, in the presence of which all that is purely private to the life and character of the individual sinks into abeyance. In its significance the cult is social rather than individual. Its ordinances are public prescriptions—in some cases acts of public worship—and serve to give expression to the sense of social solidarity. Indeed it is as a social, and to that extent impersonal, institution that religion first appears as an overt historical phenomenon.

Between the impersonal, however, in this primitive sense and the impersonal viewpoint of developed religions there is as great a difference as that which distinguishes the personalism implicit in the animistic view of nature from the subjectivism of a decadent civilization. In each instance it is a case not of adding a new aspect to the situation, but of the failure so far to abstract elements already confusedly present. Thus it is neither more true nor more false to say of religion in its initial stages that its animistic character implies the personalist standpoint than it is to say that its social and institutional character implies the impersonal. The whole truth includes both statements. Only, once these statements have been made, it is right to add that the social and institutional nature of religion contains the germ out of which the impersonal element, in some cases, was

destined to develop in later times. This is particularly true of the ritual and legalistic aspects of the subject.

*As illustrated in the History of Hebrew Religion :  
the Impersonal supplants the Directness of  
Personal Communion, and assumes a Legalistic  
Form*

Again, the most illuminating example is to be found in the history of Hebrew religion. The peculiar value of this illustration lies in the fact that Jewish history, more than any other, is religious history. The ancient Hebrew tended to look at every question from the religious point of view. Thus whatever developments occur must be considered in relation to the one predominating interest. The result is that among the Jews of scriptural times the various interests which other peoples learned sooner or later to place side by side with religion in a position of semi-autonomy—the political organization of the state, for example, social custom, morality and law—retained their original character as the expression not merely of man's relations to man or to his physical environment, but of his relations to the divine being. Hence the profound integration of all these interests with one another under the influence of their common integration with religion—an integration which appears alike in the tendency to define man's religious attitude in terms of his moral obligations and to interpret his moral obligations as a conformity to the divine will. Hence also the comprehensiveness of that code of prescriptions which the Hebrews conceived as law, combining, as it does, directions for the conduct of man's re-

ligious life (ritual in the strict meaning of the term) with regulations and injunctions which we should now regard as of purely hygienic, economic or juridical significance. Along with all this there is much that from any other point of view would come under no such special category, but would be put down as purely conventional.

The standpoint from which this vast synthesis must be conceived is determined by the fact that the unifying principle is religion. Ritual is made up of acts having a religious significance. If, therefore, a religious meaning is extended to the whole of human conduct, it follows that every act of life must be an act of ritual. This applies to all the activities which, as just remarked, we should now interpret rather from the standpoint of an autonomous ethical, legal or economic system. Ritual then is the comprehensive rubric under which the devout mind of the ancient Hebrew placed the whole business of living.

For a fuller understanding of the situation a few simple historical remarks are needful. In the first place we want to learn, if possible, how it was that the various forms and aspects of human activity, which are usually kept in separate categories, came in this instance to be assimilated to the uniform type of religious observances. The explanation doubtless involves insoluble ethnological problems; but something can be learned from the broad and well known facts of Jewish history.

Two features are of primary importance. These features seem to be directly opposed to one another; but neither can be omitted from any account of the ritualist standpoint, and between them they go far towards furnishing the key to our problem.

To begin with, the Hebrew people are marked from an early period by a sense of the uniqueness of their tribal God among the gods, and of the uniqueness of their relationship to Him. This expresses their own view of themselves.

On the other hand, it is impossible to detach the Hebrews in an anthropological sense from the ethnic group to which they belong, the Semites; and while it is true that they contrived, under the pressure of political and religious influences, to throw around themselves a breastwork of exclusiveness such as has hardly been surpassed by any small ethnic subgroup, it is equally clear that throughout the earlier phases of their history, and indeed up to the days of the Captivity, this separatist movement was continually opposed to, and to some extent frustrated by, a tendency to religious assimilation with neighbouring and racially cognate peoples. The reason for the oft-repeated relapses into idolatry, the coquetting with alien cults and practices, was simply that in their origins the Hebrews belonged to the same stock as the peoples around them, who carried on the primitive tradition, while the Hebrews, under a succession of great leaders and teachers, were striking out a new and superior line of development.

Here then we find the first hint of a reason for the remarkable synthesis to which reference has been made. To whatever extent the separatist tendency prevailed, it would be absurd to suppose that it could ever have succeeded in obliterating the common racial background of this people, with all the traces of the primitive which such a background was bound to include. On the other hand, it is precisely these generic racial traits, with their primitive content,

against which the separatist consciousness was forced to expend its effort. Hence we should expect to find traces of an aboriginal (or at least prehistoric) ritual heavily overlaid with new meanings—meanings expressive of the national sense of a unique spiritual elevation. As a matter of fact this is just what we do find. Many of the ceremonial practices of the Hebrews are survivals of taboo, and can be paralleled from the practices of the Arabs and other neighbouring peoples.<sup>1</sup> But this is the last fact in their religious history which the Hebrews would have been willing to recognize. Rather, in their eagerness to dissociate themselves from practices, and from a view of life, which they had learned to stigmatize as *heathen*, they hastened to transform the primitive material by the inspirations of their religious and ethical genius. Thus there arose the great conception of a Law, received at the hands of the divine being Himself, which was at once the Law of the Hebrew God and the universal moral law of life. This same Law became for the Hebrews the charter of their separate nationhood. Around it the national consciousness consolidated. Here we discern their true Holy of Holies, the thing in human life which brought man into the veritable presence of the Divine.

The determining factor in the ritual development of Hebrew religion is the way in which the whole tendency links up with the separatist movement. Rules and observances which have their roots in the common ideas and practices of primitive peoples become *separated off* among the Hebrews as the

<sup>1</sup> On this *vide* W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, especially Lecture IV, and Note B at the end of the volume (2nd edition).

insignia of a chosen and peculiar race. The full force of this is seen if we contrast it with the laxity of Roman religion, syncretizing easily with anything with which it came into contact, and, in its later phases, throwing its doors wide open to every oriental influence. On the other hand, the ceremonial exclusiveness of the Hebrews might be paralleled by that of the Hindus. In this case, however, there is one fundamental difference. The religion of the Brahman, like the religions of the East in general, tends, as it develops to its higher levels, to emancipate itself from the bonds of ritual altogether. Thus the progress of the devout Hindu, starting from the meticulous observance of the vastly elaborate ceremonial of the Vedas, terminates, as we have seen, in a religion of contemplative illumination, which is hardly a religion at all, and in which the Vedic ceremonial appears as no better than a necessary delusion—something incidental to the beginning of the spiritual pilgrimage, but destined in the end to become a transparent vanity. Religious development among the Hebrews took the opposite direction. Instead of seeking to penetrate behind the veil of ceremonial usage to the unity of the divine nature, they sought to bring God down into the endlessly varied occasions of human existence, by the endless multiplication of observances. The ideal is that of a perfection, a *completeness*, to be attained, not by the complete simplification, but by the complete elaboration, of life.

It must not be supposed that this tendency asserted itself all at once or without a severe struggle in the religious annals of the Jews. In pre-Exilic days a strong counter-tendency is to be found in the pro-

phetic movement. This movement, although in many respects contrary to the one with which we have been dealing, had its origin among the selfsame causes, and was a collateral expression of very similar motives. The utterances of the prophets are instinct with the same sense of separateness, the same intense nationalism, of which the Law became the eventual symbol. But the Law does not stand between the prophets and the immediacy of divine revelation. Perfervid as is at times their nationalism, they nevertheless represent the individualistic motive in religion. Their inspired utterances were the result of direct personal communion with the divine being or with his ministers. But in post-Exilic times the prophetic function fell into abeyance, or was driven, by the severe restrictions imposed upon it, to seek disguise in apocalyptic allegories. The Babylonian Captivity had consolidated the national self-consciousness, and with the return from exile the separatist movement culminated in what might almost be called the apotheosis of the Law.<sup>1</sup> Henceforward the Law became the supreme revelation of the will of God to man. It was forbidden to add one word to it, or to take one word away. Yet the fascination which it exercised over the Hebrew mind had to find an active outlet ; and the natural outlet was the work of commenting upon the sacred text. Thus arose the " tradition of the Elders ", which was an oral commentary, handed down from generation to generation, upon the Law of Moses. In course of time this tradition

<sup>1</sup> This period in Jewish history is ushered in by the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah; which embrace the period from the return of the exiles under Zerubbabel in 537 B.C. to Nehemiah's second visit to Jerusalem in 432 B.C. *Vide* Driver, *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, p. 540 (9th edition).

developed into a vast corpus of detailed prescriptions, in which the attempt was made to apply the general injunctions of the Law to every possible contingency in life. To know the Law and to know how to apply it was the characteristic achievement of the religious consciousness. Religion and morality (now completely merged in religion) became one stupendous piece of casuistry—not a subjective casuistry of motives like that of Suarez and the Jesuits, but an objective casuistry of works.

As the body of traditional prescriptions grew in bulk, the necessity arose of editing it and reducing it to a canon. This was rendered all the more imperative by the fact that in the process of oral transmission a large number of different versions inevitably made their appearance. The work of reduction was carried on over a long period of time, and finally resulted in two great collections, the Mishna, which was the first stratum of the Talmud to be reduced to writing, and the Gemara. The Mishna was completed about A.D. 200, and is largely due to the labour of the great Rabbi Jehudah, the 'Rabbi' *par excellence*.

In considering the legalistic pharisaism which was reduced to form in the Talmud, we must combine two points of view. In its own place and in its own way the Talmud is a vast digest of laws, embodying the legal experience of centuries of Jewish history. As such, its place is with any other legal code, the Pandects, for example, and the Institutes of Justinian, or the corpus of English judge-made law. On the other hand there is a profound difference of standpoint between secular law which seeks to define and regulate man's rights and obligations

only where these affect the externals of civic organization, and the religious law which dares to invade the privacy of the individual life and to exhibit the total content of personal morality as a vast mosaic of legal observances.

One of the most serious consequences of this method of elaboration is a certain effect of *flatness*, a uniformity of moral relief quite in keeping with the nature of mosaic work.<sup>1</sup> In the Talmud, for example, are to be found most of the things which Christianity stresses as the deep interior truths of the spiritual life.<sup>2</sup> Only, they are apt to appear not in the form of underlying principles, but alongside the superficial detail. They are more in the nature of epitomes than of principles : they are the main generalizations, rather than the presuppositions, of

<sup>1</sup> Of course this must not be taken to mean that the Talmud presents all rules of conduct as equally binding or all breaches of the tradition as equally heinous.

<sup>2</sup> So much so that anti-Christian writers can point to the Talmud as containing all that is vital in Christian teaching. On the ground that the great sayings of Jesus are almost all to be found somewhere or other in the "tradition of the Elders", they have gone so far as to maintain that Jesus could never have given them utterance, and that his utterance could never have been with power, had he not found them there. Here are a few sentences from an apologist for Judaism : ". . . it is fully proved that all the ethical teachings of Judaism—and Jesus taught, or reproduced, nothing else—whether compiled as an organized work or not, were co-existent with the Written Law or Pentateuch. To any one acquainted with Rabbinical lore and its expressions, the utterances of Jesus would at once be apparent as the utterance of one of the Rabbis or one of his disciples" (Cf. the frequency with which Jesus is addressed as 'Rabbi'. This seems to indicate that his contemporaries tended to class him with their official teachers. John i, 35-39, 49 ; iii, 2 ; vi, 25). "Indeed, had the words of Jesus been original, or had the phrases he used not been already known by the compilers of the Talmud as the words of their predecessors and masters, they would not have given them a place in the Talmud. Jesus learnt all he knew of the Rabbis, and, in diffusing their teachings, he employed the very idioms and figures\* of speech of which they made use" (Rapaport, *Tales and Maxims from the Talmud*, First Series, Introd. p. 84).

morality. In this way depth is made to appear as superficialities. The great maxims are not trusted to work like a leaven from within. They have to be brought to the surface in the form of a detailed statement, a commentary.<sup>1</sup> In this case, we may say with truth, the detail is indeed the best commentary on the text ! What oils and wicks are permissible and non-permissible on the Sabbath and the ' Hanukah ' (a feast of the Maccabbees) ; practical laws concerning the use of egg-shells as lamps ; whether a chair may be dragged along the floor on the Sabbath day ;<sup>2</sup> minutiae as to the method to be followed in paring the finger-nails ;<sup>3</sup> instructions as to the circumstances under which a stone may be removed from the top of a barrel<sup>4</sup>—such are typical specimens of the com-

<sup>1</sup> This point of view comes out in the letter and in the spirit of a story which is told of Hillel : " Another Gentile came to Shamai saying : ' Convert me on the condition that thou teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot ' . Shamai pushed him away with the builders' measure he held in his hand He thereupon came to Hillel, and the latter accepted him He told him, ' What is hateful to thee, do not unto thy fellow ; this is the whole law. All the rest is a commentary to this law ' " (*The Babylonian Talmud*, tr. Rodkinson, vol i, p. 50). On a superficial consideration it might appear as if Hillel had really anticipated Christ's enunciation of the " Golden Rule " ; but, as we shall see in another connection, there is all the difference in the world between the meaning of the rule as stated negatively by Hillel and its meaning as stated affirmatively by Jesus. In any case the point of the story is to show what an exceptional man Hillel was.

<sup>2</sup> From the Mishna. Vide *The Babylonian Talmud*, vol. 1, in Rodkinson's translation.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 179 sq.

<sup>4</sup> It might be worth while giving a sample of the casuistry involved. The last-mentioned instance (another sabbatical problem) will afford a good illustration. " Gemara We have learned in another Mishna : ' If a stone lie at the opening of a barrel, the barrel may be bent over, so that the stone fall down ' . Said Rabba in the name of R. Ami, quoting R. Johanan : ' The case applies only when the stone lying at the opening of the barrel was left there unintentionally ; but if placed there on purpose, the barrel becomes a base for a prohibited thing (and must not be moved) ' . R. Joseph in the name of R. Assi, quoting R.

mentary upon which the comprehensive maxims of the spiritual life are to depend for their concrete filling.

In a religion and a morality so conceived, it is clear that the personal agent is judged by his outward acts, and that consequently the personal factor is interpreted in terms of that in it which is most superficial, most nearly related to the outer and impersonal setting of human life.

Another respect in which the spiritual takes on the complexion of the mechanical and impersonal appears in the futile attempt to impart depth to the two-dimensional morality of the Law by setting up standards in excess of what the Law demands. The thing that was all surface now becomes all length. An illustration occurs in connection with the institution of tithes—an institution which further exemplifies the way in which the Hebrew genius transformed the primitive stuff of religion under the pressure of the impulse to exclusiveness. Among the Hebrew survivals of a primitive ritual is the offering of first-fruits; but tithes belong to a somewhat different category. The distinction is thus explained by Robertson Smith :

“ The principle that the god of the land claims a tribute on the increase of the soil was originally expressed in the offering of first-fruits, at a time when sanctuaries and their service were too simple

Johanan, said, on the contrary : ‘ If the stone was left there unintentionally the barrel must be bent over, so that the stone fall down ; but if placed there intentionally, it serves as a lid to the barrel, and may be removed ’. On what points do R. Ami and R. Assi differ ? One holds, that an act must be accomplished in order to be an act, while the other holds the intention to be equivalent to the deed, and their respective theories are borne out by their opinions which follow. . . .” (*ibid.* vol. i, p. 272).

to need any elaborate provision for their support. The tithe originated when worship became more complex and ritual more splendid, so that a fixed tribute was necessary for its maintenance.”<sup>1</sup>

Here then we have evidence of an expanding ritual which required special provision for its support. But the point we have in view is the fact that the act of tithing itself appears in time to have acquired the significance and sanctity of a ritual performance. The punctilious payment of tithes is among the things for which merit was claimed by the ceremonially righteous; and it was esteemed a special merit to exceed the demands of the Law. “I give tithes of all that I get”,<sup>2</sup> says the over-righteous Pharisee in the parable, meaning: “I give more than is required”.<sup>3</sup>

It is precisely this spirit which is condemned by Jesus in that great catalogue of denunciations in Matthew xxiii:

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you tithe mint and dill and cummin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith.”<sup>4</sup>

It has been pointed out that in tithing these herbs the Pharisees are overstepping the letter of the Law itself as expressed in the Books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, but that they are doing

<sup>1</sup> *The Religion of the Semites*, p. 251 (2nd edition).

<sup>2</sup> Luke xviii, 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Vide* Gressmann and Klostermann *in loco*, in Lietzmann's *Handbuch zum neuen Testament*, Band II, p. 543.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew xxiii, 23. Cf. Luke xi, 42: “But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass by judgment and the love of God”.

so in conformity with later casuistic elaborations of the Law. Thus in the Maaser, a treatise in that part of the Mishna which deals with agricultural regulations, it is laid down :

“ Everything that is eaten and preserved and that grows in the earth is subject to tithing ” (Maaser i, 1) ;

and again :

“ R. Eliezer said : ‘ Of dill must one tithe the seed and the leaves and the stalk ’ ” (Maaser iv, 5).<sup>1</sup>

Such morbid straining to outdo the Law itself has of course its subjective side. It is the product of a monstrous egotism, and from this point of view it would not be correct to adduce the extravagances of Pharisaism as evidence of the drift to the impersonal. But the point we have in mind is that the over-cultivation of the Law, while it points to a condition of spiritual inflation, at the same time obscures the nature of religion as a personal relation with the Divine. The preoccupation of the Pharisee with the Tradition has something in it analogous to the substitution, in modern times, of technical and con-

<sup>1</sup> Thus in Lietzmann's commentary : “ ‘ Die nach Lev. xxvii, 30, Num. xviii, 12, Deut. xii, 6, xiv, 22 f., nur auf Korn, Oel, Most und Früchte sich erstreckende Zehntpflicht wird vom Uebereifer des Werkdienstes auch auf die kleinsten Feldfrüchte . . . ausgedehnt ’. H. Holtzmann. Dass Jesus nicht übertreibt, kann man im allgemeinen an der kultischen Kasuistik etwa des Mischnatraktats Abodah zarah sehen, speziell vgl. auch noch B. Joma f. 83 b, Maaser, i, 1 über das Zehnten von kleinen (Kuchen-) Kräutern : *alles was man isst und hütet und was sein Wachstum aus der Erde hat, ist zehntpflichtig*, und Maaser iv. 5 : Rabbi Elieser sagte : *von Dill muss man zehnten den Samen und die Blätter und die Stengel* (?) . . . ” Cf. Allen in *The International Critical Commentary, in loco*, p. 247.

tractual relations between organized masses of men, for the direct intercourse between individuals which was the social policy of a simpler age. The religious life which is beset on every hand by regulations tends to *terminate* in these ; and thus there is woven across the face of the divine person a vast screen of technicalities and conventions. The Law tends to usurp the place of God, and the Tradition the place of the Law. In the end we are dealing not with the direct decrees of Jehovah, but with the decisions of Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Assi. And so Hebrew religion loses what in an earlier age was most significant in it, its profoundly individual and theocentric character.

*As illustrated in the History of Greek Religion and of Greek Philosophical Thought : was tantamount to the Establishment of a Secular, as opposed to a Religious, View of Nature and of Human Life*

In the religion of the Hebrews, then, the impersonal which gradually supplants the directness of personal communion with the Divine, assumes a legalistic form. Among the Greeks the same tendency asserts itself in other and equally characteristic ways. Two of these are of special interest—the growing autonomy of the Physical and the growing autonomy of the Ethical. In contradistinction to the Hebrew development, however, the growth of the impersonal standpoint among the Greeks can hardly be described as a development within the limits of religion. It was so in certain of its phases, but in others it was tantamount to the establishment of a secular, as opposed to a religious, view of nature and of human life.

We have seen that in the early history of Greek religion two distinct developments can be detected. There is an aboriginal animistic phase, of which no inconsiderable traces remain in the established ritual of later times. In this phase, as already pointed out, religion assumed a characteristic form in the worship of serpents, chthonic spirits and ghosts—*κῆρες*. The later development, represented by the cult of the Olympians, marks a distinct advance in personalism. The animistic standpoint has given place to the anthropomorphic.

It is the misfortune of Greek religion that its anthropomorphic mould was peculiarly ill-adapted, both from the ethical and from the cosmological point of view, to sustain the inevitable arrival of a reflective age among a highly critical people. The Olympian mythology does not lend itself to transformation from within, and there is something peculiarly unconvincing and artificial in attempts like that of Metrodorus of Lampsacus to rationalize the myths by reducing the heroes and gods to personified forces of nature.<sup>1</sup> So far as explanation of the *physical* world was concerned, there was practically no alternative open to the Greeks between the absurdities of the old cosmogony and virtual atheism. In an age of culture the traditional mythology, while it continued to furnish material to the arts, was a thing for which no place could be found in serious speculation. To the extent to which religion was tied up with mythology, it had either to be

<sup>1</sup> Agamemnon is the ether, Achilles-the sun, Hector the moon, Paris and Helen air and earth. Metrodorus also attempts a parallel between the liver, spleen and bile on the one hand, and Demeter, Dionysus and Apollo on the other. *Vide* Gomperz, *Greek Thinkers*, vol. i, p. 378 *sq.*, and note.

rescued from the latter or had to go. In the fifth century B.C. the movement towards emancipation is under way. Xenophanes of Colophon in particular combines the ethical and cosmological points of view in an attack on the traditional religion, and the brunt of his accusation is to be found in the anthropomorphic character of the latter.

Of much greater interest is the influence of ethical reflection as a force making for the development of an impersonal attitude within the limits of religion itself. The vehement negations of Xenophanes are not more significant of the transition that was taking place than is the quiet appearance, on the pages of Æschylus, of a host of impersonal powers—or rather of one power which, under many names, suddenly assumes the rôle of destiny hitherto played by the gods. 'Ανάγκη, Ἄτη, μοῖρα, νέμεσις, εἰμαρμένη, Ἀδράστεια, Δίκη—such are the names given to what is virtually a law dimly discerned behind the Olympians, but seen to be eternal and unchangeable, a law whereby his lot in life is apportioned to man.<sup>1</sup>

What from our point of view is most significant, however, is the fact that the virtual substitution of the impersonal agency of Fate for personal relations with the gods coincides with the introduction, for the first time, of a profoundly moral interpretation of life. The Homeric poems are on the whole frankly non-moral or naïvely pre-moral; and if we insist on applying ethical standards to them, we shall have to think of them, with Plato, as in many instances positively *immoral*. To apply such standards, however, would be an anachronism. Not that there are

<sup>1</sup> Several of these names are from roots that mean to distribute, to allot.

not ethically beautiful things in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*; but that such things are there more or less accidentally. They are not the fundamental *motif* as they are in Æschylus. Furthermore, strictly ethical values are obscured by the indiscriminate and purely conventional application of honorific epithets. Morality really emerges as a theme, and a category, with the development of the impersonal point of view.

The effect upon religion is that of a genuine revolution. The teachings of Socrates and Plato reveal the movement in its philosophical phase. In the *Euthyphro*, for example, Socrates inverts the primitive conception of holiness, by showing that what is holy is not so because it is a divinely appointed ordinance, or because the gods desire it. On the contrary the gods desire it because it is holy. In this way the personality of the gods, as expressed through their desires, is subordinated to the conception of the universe as an underived system of timeless and impersonal moral principles.

In Books II and III of the *Republic* Plato subjects the traditional mythology to a thorough criticism and revision on ethical grounds. The gods could not have been as they are represented, because as represented they are immoral, and this is not compatible with their nature as divine.<sup>1</sup> Morality is thus used as a defining conception which must be given the first place in any attempt to determine the divine nature.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the absence of the ethical ingredient, the numinous, which, as we have seen, is the differentia of holiness, is shown to fall short of a genuinely definitory character.

<sup>2</sup> In the history of Egyptian religion we encounter a curious but quite intelligible confusion in the identification of the holy. The

One serious consequence of this way of putting things is at once evident. Since God is by definition only and altogether good, and since there is more evil than good in the world (a judgment in which Aristotle, like all good Greeks, concurs), the divine causation is reduced to a relatively minor rôle in the affairs of the world.<sup>1</sup> Thus although Plato's point of view is consistently theistic, the personalist aspect of God's nature shrinks into relative insignificance as compared with the impersonal character of moral law to which gods and men are alike subject.

The result is very illuminating as regards the relation of morality and religion. Looking at the subject from the standpoint of the former, we see that morality is conceived less as a correlation of will to will (of the human will to the divine), than as a correlation of wills (the divine as well as the human) to an eternal order. Or, to put the matter otherwise, the coordinates in the case are not a human and a divine person, but the principle of organization in any personality and the principle of organization in the cosmos. Thus the personality of both gods and men is subordinated to the conception of the universe as based upon the impersonal Ideas; and this implies a further subordination of impersonal aspect of holiness, as something to which even the gods must subject themselves, is fully recognized; it is not, however, the inexorable sanctity of moral law, but only the sanctity of the recorded mythology—the very thing which for Socrates and Plato no longer sustains the attributes of holiness. As Erman says: "The old books containing these myths were considered too sacred to be placed where profane eyes might see them, in the tomb-chapels or in the temple halls; even the gods themselves were supposed to wash seven times before reading the words of these sacred books" (*Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 264).

<sup>1</sup> *Republic*, II, 379.

religion itself, as defined by the desire of finite souls for life, to an order which expresses itself far otherwise than in the relations of living souls. The comprehensive value-judgment, while vigorously maintained by Plato, takes a form quite different from that which underlies the beginnings of religion. The idea of existence or of life as the principle of all values would have appeared to Plato quite inadequate. It is true that existence is commensurate with a certain perfection in that to which it is ascribed, but in the order of Plato's thought the perfection precedes the existence, as its condition. That which really is, is so because of *what it is*, namely, *good*, and could it be other than it is it could not *be* at all. Thus in a sense we may say that for Plato existence depends upon value, rather than value upon existence.<sup>1</sup> In the end all values derive from the supreme Idea of the Good. It is the com-  
presence of this Idea with every other that imparts to the latter whatever of 'utility or advantage' they possess, whatever entitles us to invest them with the *meaning* of value. Thus the true fount and repository of all values is a timeless and impersonal principle.

The full significance of this comes out strikingly if we compare the Platonic standpoint with that of Christianity.

"What shall a man be profited" [asks Jesus]  
"if he shall gain the whole world and forfeit his

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the word for existence, *οὐσία* (frequently translated 'essence'), is no more than the substantival equivalent of the infinitive of the verb 'to be'. *οὐσία* is *τὸ εἶναι* rendered one degree more abstract. To translate 'essence' is to go too far and to give an Aristotelian turn to Plato's thought. For Plato existence is not identical with, although it is dependent upon, what we have since learnt to think of as essence.

life, or what shall a man give in exchange for his life ? ”

For the Founder of Christianity it is the living soul (the principle of life within) that is the seat and the source of all values—that without which the ordered universe (the cosmos) becomes a thing of no account. In contrast to this, the Platonic view might be summed up in the question : What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and do not with it gain the good ? Here for instance is a passage in which the phraseology irresistibly suggests that of the New Testament, while the content reveals a fundamental difference of attitude :

“ You have often heard tell that the Idea of the good is the highest object of knowledge, and that it is by participation in it that just things and all things else become profitable and advantageous. And you may well imagine that this is what I mean to insist upon, and in addition to this that we do not know that Idea sufficiently. But if we do not know this, if we know everything else perfectly without knowing this Idea, you know that it will profit us nothing, as it would also profit us nothing to possess anything without possessing the good.”<sup>1</sup>

*One Main Difference between the Greek and the Hebrew Way of Depersonalizing Religion*

There is one striking difference between the way in which the work of depersonalizing religion was carried out by the Greeks and the way in which it

<sup>1</sup> *Republic* VI, 505 A.

was carried out by the Jews. This difference has to do with the varying degrees of integration between the religious and the ethical standpoints of these two peoples. With whatever lapses from and exceptions to the rule, the ethical standpoint was indigenous to Hebrew religion. Consequently when Hebrew morality became stereotyped in legalistic observances, it carried religion along with it. At the end of the process there is the same closeness of integration that we observe at the beginning. The practical life remains, what it had always been, the sphere of both interests. With the Greeks, on the other hand, the development of an ethical standpoint was fatal to the old religion. It was so, because in its earlier phases Greek religion was so wanting in the ethical motive, that when this motive finally emerged, it was forced to assume an autonomous or semi-autonomous form ; and in the further development religion was necessarily left behind. Thus the religion which begins without a morality ends in a morality without a commensurate religion. The movement culminates in Aristotle's conception of deity as little more than a limiting conception in physics and metaphysics—a prime mover and a thought thinking itself. Between a deity so defined and the practical life of man there is no possibility of immediate personal relations ; for in Aristotle (although he continues to use the personal form) the personal character has almost died out of God, leaving us with nothing better than the neuter, adjectival conception of the divine—*τὸ θεῖον*.

We have now found considerable confirmation for our contention that in the history of religion there

is apt to be a factor making in one way or another for impersonalism. The evidence appears all the more striking when we consider the profoundly original character of each of the developments to which we have turned our attention. It is true that in the general history of civilization a point is eventually attained at which the Greek and Hebrew contributions meet and blend ; and the same thing is true, though to a lesser degree, of the Greek and the oriental contributions. But the tendency to impersonalism is not a product of this fusion. On the contrary it precedes the fusion, and is found to have worked itself out in each case along entirely independent lines, and in ways characteristic of the highly individual civilizations of the Hindus, the Hebrews and the Greeks.

*The Movement towards the Impersonal further  
illustrated in Confucianism*

To complete our case, it is only necessary to add that the self-same tendency appears in still another, and an equally individual form, in the religion of the furthest East. About the time when a ripened Brahmanism was provoking reaction in the mind of Gautama, when the Jews were rebuilding the Temple under Zerubbabel, the great teacher of the Chinese was propounding a wisdom on the strength of which, though perhaps without any real knowledge of the original teachings, his countrymen in after ages erected temples in his name all over the celestial empire. And yet when we turn to the recorded life and words of the master it is hard to find in either the stuff of which religion is

made. In Confucianism we have a religion which, while it does not deny God, practically ignores Him. What Confucius propounded was in effect a system of ethics, or, more exactly, a collection of ethical maxims, a proverbial philosophy of life. As a moral code this philosophy has, of course, to do with personal relations ; but in its handling of these it does not seek to go behind them to sanctions resting on the nature of personality itself. The meaning of morality is not sought in the meaning of life. On the contrary the meaning of life (if indeed there is any such thing) is found in morality. Conduct is the category which throws such light as is to be expected upon the value of personal existence. Or, to put the matter otherwise, human existence is to be interpreted in terms of human relationships, rather than human relationships in terms of human existence. Thus morality becomes a question of social and political adjustments, and the law of life is to be found in the codified Rules of Propriety.

As in the case of Plato, so in the case of Confucius, a contrast with Christianity will serve to bring out the point of our contention. It is well known that five hundred years before the founder of the Christian religion epitomized the law and the prophets in what has come to be known as the "Golden Rule", the Chinese teacher gave expression to an apparently similar maxim. His rule, however, like that of Rabbinical teaching contained in the anecdote about Hillel, was formulated in negative terms. In the *Analects* or *Digested Conversations* of Confucius the following incident is reported :

"Tsz-Kung put to him the question, 'Is there one word upon which the whole life may proceed?' The master replied, 'Is not RECIPROCITY such a word?—What you do not yourself desire, do not put before others.'"<sup>1</sup>

The interpretation of this passage seems to turn upon the meaning of the word rendered "reciprocity", and of this there appears to be some uncertainty in the minds of the translators.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately we are not entirely dependent for light upon the niceties of verbal equivalence: for in another passage from the *Analects* Confucius himself supplies a very exact commentary upon the sense in which he intends that the ethics of human relation-

<sup>1</sup> *Confucian Analects*, xv, 23. I give Jennings's translation. The Golden Rule seems to have been something of a commonplace with the master and his disciples. The following passages may be subjoined to that quoted in the text. "Tsz-Kung made the remark: 'That which I do not want others to put upon me, I also wish not to put upon others.' 'Nay,' said the Master, '*you* have not got so far as that'" (*ibid.* v, 11). "Chung-Kung asked about man's proper regard for his fellows. To him the Master replied thus: 'When you go forth from your door, be as if you were meeting some guest of importance. When you are making use of the common people (for state purposes), be as if you were taking part in a great religious function. Do not set before others what you do not desire yourself'" (*ibid.* xii, 2).

<sup>2</sup> The translation 'reciprocity' rests on the high authority of Dr. Legge. Jennings notes that the word is composed of two characters meaning 'like' and 'heart'; "whence", he says, "one might expect *like-heartedness*, or *like-mindedness*". He adds: "I render the word as Dr. Legge has done, but with a little hesitation. The dictionaries give the meaning as benevolence, forbearance, considerateness, sympathy, to excuse, to bear patiently, etc. . . ." The French translator, M. G. Pauthier, gets over the difficulty by taking the Golden Rule itself, as here stated, as defining the meaning of the crucial word. "Tseu-Koung fit une question en ces termes: y a-t-il un mot dans la langue que l'on puisse se borner à pratiquer seul jusqu'à la fin de l'existence? Le Philosophe dit: Il y a le mot *chou*, dont le sens est: *Ce que l'on ne désire pas que nous soit fait, il ne faut pas le faire aux autres*" (Pauthier, *Confucius et Mencius: les quatre Livres de Philosophie morale et politique de la Chine*).

ships shall be understood. In the passage referred to he comments upon a remark attributed to Lao-Tsze : " Requite enmity with kindness ". When asked what he thought of this maxim, Confucius, we are told, replied :

" How then would you requite kindness?—  
Requite enmity with straightforwardness,<sup>1</sup> and  
kindness with kindness." <sup>2</sup>

The exact import of this advice claims our serious attention. Obviously Confucius is here indicating a point of view which is not identical either with the *quid pro quo* morality of the ancient Hebrews (" an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ") nor yet with the morality of Jesus. Furthermore the conception of straightforwardness or justice is not, like the Platonic *δικαιοσύνη*, a comprehensive notion in which all morality is included. " Straightforwardness " is a specific attitude appropriate to a specific situation, just as kindness is a specific attitude appropriate to another situation.

In thus demanding a different reaction to different types of conduct, Confucius shows that for him it is not feasible to go behind all differences in human behaviour to something in the nature of man as such, which is not fully comprised in any such discrimination. On the contrary, in all our reactions to good and evil it should be our aim to keep the difference alive by diversifying our reactions to different kinds

<sup>1</sup> Legge renders : " Recompense injury with justice " ; Pauthier : " Il faut payer par l'équité la haine et les injures ".

<sup>2</sup> *Conf. An.* xiv, 36, Jennings. Pauthier's note is worth citing in part : " L'Évangile dit qu'il faut rendre le bien pour le mal ; le *Koran*, qu'il faut rendre le mal pour le mal. Le précepte du Philosophe chinois nous paraît moins sublime que celui de Jésus, mais peut-être plus conforme aux lois équitables de la nature humaine."

of treatment. In all this the outward act is so decisive that we are forbidden to seek for a principle of discrimination more fundamental than that which distinguishes one type of action from another.

Now of course I do not mean to suggest that Christianity tends to minimize the distinction of good and evil, or to mitigate or condone the heinousness of the latter. No other religion has been so saturated with a sense of the irremediable awfulness of moral evil, and a conviction of sin stands in the forefront as a first condition of the Christian life. In its recognition of the indefeasible difference between good and evil Christianity goes far beyond Confucianism. But for this very reason it rejects the view which would dispose of the difference between two types of action by matching each with its distinctive reaction. The moral issue is thus at once projected upon a plane that is not the plane of conduct or of those distinctions which differentiate one piece of conduct from another. Behind all human behaviour Christianity sees a personal agent, a living soul; and the distinction of good and evil, as this applies at the superficial level of human relationships, becomes merely the index of a profounder difference, expressible in the last resort only in terms of that which from the standpoint of personal existence is the most fundamental of all differences, the difference between life and death.

Thus Christianity interprets the moral distinctions as an expression or externalization of all that it means to be a person, the bearer of a moral destiny. Confucianism on the contrary tends to look at the meaning of personal existence or human life in general through the medium of a technique, the

technique of human relations ; and this of itself implies a certain depersonalization of morality.

*The Significance for Religion of the Impersonal Point of View*

Enough has now been said to illustrate the thesis that in the religions of the world there is a widespread tendency to pass from the personal to the impersonal point of view. It remains to consider the significance of this tendency for religion as such—that is, for the general concept which from the beginning we have been trying to establish.

In the final treatment of oriental mysticism I disposed of one aspect of the question. There it was stated that the extent to which the impersonal may be admitted to the concept of religion is determined by the necessity of leaving man's finite selfhood unimpaired ; and I added some such words as these : "the concept of religion demands that the impersonal shall not be found to render it impossible that persons should exist ".<sup>1</sup>

The specific form in which the problem now confronts us is due to the specific character of the factors which we now see to threaten the personalist point of view, namely, a stereotyped ritual and an autonomous morality. This problem may therefore be brought under two distinct heads, the relation between ritual and religion, and the relation between religion and morality.

The necessity of ritual in religion has already been acknowledged ; but this necessity is relative to the purposes which ritual can be made to subserve.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 6.

These purposes may be summarized as those of symbolizing the religious solidarity of the tribe or group, of investing the crude desires of the instinctive life with universality and stability, and, more important still, of providing a genuine means of intercourse between the human individual or the group and the dimly discerned person of the divine being. It is this aspect of the case that now invites our attention.

So long as ritual was thought of as calculated to influence the divine being in His relations with the human subject, however crude and primitive it may have been in its detail, its significance was unmistakably religious. It terminated in the idea of a personal or quasi-personal appeal. At this stage of human development religion covers all the significant relationships of life—everything which at a later stage comes to establish itself autonomously as morality, custom, organization and law. All these institutions, therefore, as they exist to begin with, would have to be characterized as religious phenomena ; and if it is true that there is as yet nothing to distinguish religion from anything else, it is so in the sense that religion is everything.

Now the feature that differentiates the phase of development which we have been describing from the phase which succeeds it is the fact that when the ritual side of religion is elaborated beyond a certain point, as in the Vedic period of Hindu religion or in Talmudic Judaism, even if, as in both these instances, ritual carries religion with it, we cannot say, as before, that the phenomena in question can only be characterized in one way, namely, as phenomena of religion. No doubt they can be so characterized ; but they can be characterized in other ways as well

—for instance, as law or hieratical prescription. Elaboration tends to become an end in itself, and the purpose originally underlying it no longer invests it in any very clear sense with the significance of a mediatorial function. When this point is reached, we must revise our previous statement, and instead of saying that *as yet* there is nothing to distinguish religion from anything else, because religion is all in all, we must say that it is *no longer* possible to distinguish religion from institutions which may quite as well be characterized in purely secular terms.

The case of morality is somewhat different. Historically speaking, religion begins with an established ritual. That is to say, it requires a ritual to make a religion. The same cannot be said of religion in its relation to morality. As we have seen, there is a pre-ethical period in its development, and while in the course of evolution a point is reached at which religion has to reckon with an awakened ethical consciousness, this of itself does not determine the nature of the adjustment. As in the case of the Hebrews, morality may find itself at home with religion from a very early point, or, as in the case of the Greeks, ethics may become a powerful critique of religion. Of one thing we can be sure. When religion and morality fail to synthesize, morality may hold its own against religion, but religion will have the utmost difficulty in maintaining itself against morality.

This statement would seem to imply a certain discrimination in favour of the secular and against the religious attitude to life and to life's problems. It would seem to accord to a secular morality a

power and autonomy which is denied, under the conditions stated, to religion. In the event of a genuine conflict, it is religion that goes to the wall.

There is some truth in this, but the truth is superficial ; and the statement, from the standpoint of actual fact, requires further consideration. For example, it would be wrong to assume that when the religious and the secular view of life stand opposed to one another, and the former is seen to give way before the latter, the inference to be drawn is that religion has less to say for itself. Before we can hope to justify such a judgment, we must inquire into the circumstances under which religion finds itself in this position. It may well be that the conflict is one which should never have arisen, or which, when the truth about religion and about morality is known, cannot be sustained. This problem will furnish sufficient matter for a separate inquiry.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE SELF-CRITICISM OF RELIGION IN THE DEFINING OF ITS RELATIONS TO THE SECULAR

#### *The Retreat of Religion in Face of the Secularist Attitude*

THERE can be no doubt that among the characteristic phenomena of our maturing western civilization is the evolution of a secular, in place of a religious, attitude to life. If we compare the spirit-haunted world of primitive man with the world of nature as we see it to-day, it is here that we find the greatest contrast. There was a time when the whole business of living, whether in its normal aspect as a daily routine, or in its periodic crises, was accompanied by a brooding sense of demonic presences, to which man was fain to address himself for succour and protection. Every contingency was an occasion for religious ceremonial. The religious attitude was habitual. In the course of centuries, during which man has learned to relate himself as a person to nature as a set of impersonal forces, this attitude has undergone a striking reversal. So far at least as the western world is concerned, it would not be too much to say that on the whole man hardly knows what to do with his religion, or where to find a place for it in the circle of his interests. It has very largely ceased to be the *normal*—it is probably seldom the *paramount*—business of life. In most cases religion

has become little better than an obscure background, with episodic incursions upon the steady march of our secular preoccupations. It is only, or chiefly, in moments of crisis and severe strain, when the family is visited by bereavement, or when some public calamity stirs men to the depths and induces a temporary displacement of all perspectives, that the dormant religious impulses awake to momentary activity. For the rest, religion tends more and more to be the *exceptional* thing in our modern life.

This retreat of the religious in face of the secularist attitude is a phenomenon that can hardly be ignored in any attempt to fix the concept of religion. There are various explanations that at once suggest themselves. One is that the day of religion is virtually over, that the growth of knowledge and the mechanical mastery of nature have superseded what was really no better than a primitive misunderstanding, and that the time will in all probability come when science and social organization between them will quietly take over whatever still remains within the doubtful and hesitating jurisdiction of religion.

Another possible explanation is that the secularist tendency represents a fundamental blunder, a loss of insight into the deeper truth, and a growing blindness to the essential values.

Between these extreme positions is the attitude of those who, acknowledging the validity of the secular standpoint as embodied in science and in the economic and political organization of human life, still seek to find a place for religion in those fields of experience—for example, in creative artistic endeavour, friendship and moral feeling—which seem to them to

evade the categories of science and the regimentation of life along official lines.

This latter attitude is particularly worthy of consideration. It embodies the praiseworthy resolve not to relinquish something which, though not quite understood, may turn out to be indispensable—the well-meant attempt to steer a middle course between competing fanaticisms, the desire to accord to science and the secular whatever they can prove to be theirs by right of conquest, but without surrendering the whole of life to them upon demand.

### *Must Religion be All or Nothing?*

But the strength of a middle position is in this instance seriously challenged by the question whether religion is a thing which admits of a divided allegiance, whether it can be put and kept in its place—especially where that place is the ever-narrowing fringe of life that has not yielded to the secular touch. The question irresistibly forces itself upon the mind : Is it not the case that with religion it must be all or nothing?

This question brings us to the very threshold of the problem which we have so far reserved for later treatment—the problem of validity. As we are not yet quite ready for this final inquiry, we shall have to confine ourselves to such aspects of the case as do not imply more than a definition of religion. This we can do by interpreting the question before us as a demand to know whether the *concept* or definition of religion does not include the notion of absoluteness, whether we are able to *think* the idea of religion without thinking the *idea* of a universal and

unchallenged jurisdiction over human existence.

We shall meet this issue with a further application of our chosen method. The question we must put is the question how, from the standpoint of human evolution in its later phases, the secular attitude to life originated and developed in a world which, to begin with, seemed decisively orientated for religion.

We tend to assume that the explanation is to be found in the rise and development of science, or, more comprehensively speaking, of that mechanical civilization of which science is the most characteristic feature. Of course there can be no doubt that these factors have had much to do with the change we are examining; but to say that they explain the change is to confuse explanation with a mere statement of the fact to be explained. The real question is not as to the forms which the secular attitude to life has assumed, but as to the reasons why religion should have given place so largely to the secular attitude at all.

As a matter of convenience we shall state our conclusion forthwith, and shall then proceed to the historical considerations which appear to lend it support. In brief, then, *the development of a secular standpoint can be understood only from the religious point of view. It is a phenomenon of the process by which, to repeat a phrase already employed, religion advances beyond its own animistic beginnings.*

A statement of this sort might appear at first sight no better than a disingenuous attempt to claim for religion some share in a movement which it finds itself no longer able to resist, but which it consistently opposed so long as it had the power. The accusation, however, will prove to be baseless if it

can be shown that the part played by religion is not really that of an *ex post facto* accommodation to a *fait accompli*, and that on the contrary the initial movement in the direction of a secular view of nature is one with the movement whereby religion becomes clearly and consistently theistic, and theism becomes definitely spiritual.

*The Development of the Secular Attitude to Nature :  
if God is to be treated as God, Nature must be  
treated as Nature*

That this is so appears in every chapter of that stupendous spiritual development which leads from Judaism to Christianity. In the literature of the Hebrew people we see religion defining itself under conditions which preclude the thought of any competing influence such as science. As yet there is no science in existence to divide men's allegiance with a theistic interpretation of life ; and the political and economic organization of society is definitely theocratic in its conception. Such development as occurs is, therefore, a development from within ; and the comprehensive category which includes every phase of the movement is the category of religion.

Yet within this category there emerges, by a necessity peculiar to religion itself and to its development, a profound sense of the distinction between God and nature. This sense is at the bottom of the process whereby the idea of God impresses itself upon the Hebrew mind. Indeed we may go so far as to say that nature is discovered by the same act of thought by which religion passes from the demons to the notion of a God. The transition is effected by

means of certain ideas in the light of which the divine being is placed in a new and more definite relation to the physical universe. That vague local identity characteristic of animism and its later anthropomorphic developments gives way before the clear distinction between the deity as creator and his creation. The God from whom nature is now seen to detach itself is the Lord who made heaven and earth; and it is to this Lord and not to any local deity or genius of the place, that the Psalmist addresses his appeal when he says, " I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help ".

But the relationship of creation and creator is far from expressing all that is implied in the disintegration of the confused animistic complex. As time goes on, the nature of deity defines itself less and less in terms of any merely external relationship to nature, and more and more in terms of an inner moral relationship with man. To the deeper consciousness of the prophet, in the hour of his spiritual crisis, the death-dealing terrors of nature, in which the primitive mind would have seen the very type of divine action, lose all religious significance. They have no message to convey to the spirit that calamity has crushed.<sup>1</sup> Neither the " great and strong wind " that " rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before Jehovah ", nor yet the earthquake that followed the wind, nor the fire that succeeded the earthquake could inspire the sense of a divine presence. Jehovah was not in these, but in the still small voice that came when nature's voice was hushed. For the fierce and disappointed prophet

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xix.

nature had become opaque to godhead, her most impressive forms impervious to the meanings with which in an earlier age they had been saturated. It matters little if the wind, the earthquake and the fire are not to be understood literally, but as figures of the prophet's tumultuous mood; indeed it matters little whether or not there is any historical truth in the narrative. This much is indisputable: we have here the reflection of a phase of thought in which external nature was no longer capable of sustaining the inner meanings which religion was revealing to the heart and soul of man. The enfranchisement of the spirit in the world of religious values is at the same time the disfranchisement of nature. It is a revelation of the secular.

Of all this the practical counterpart is to be found in the iconoclastic mission of the prophets. The gods of the heathen are seen to be no gods at all. And thus we have the spectacle of religion exorcising religion. There are things in the world which are not gods and are not haunted by them: there is an aspect of things which is not divine. The discovery of God's *supernatural* character invests the natural with a certain independence. It must be distinguished and set apart as inferior. In relation to man and to his powers it reveals a new significance—the significance of that which is no longer thought of as above him, but is thought of as below him. He begins to see in nature something over which he can exercise a measure of control. He can mould its substance with his hands and imprint upon it the devices of his thought; and when he does so, the result is an *idol*, a graven *image*. In such there is no spark of the divine nature.

“ They have mouths, but they speak not ; eyes have they, but they see not ; they have ears, but they hear not ; noses have they, but they smell not ; they have hands, but they handle not ; feet have they, but they walk not. Neither speak they through their throat. They that make them shall be like unto them ; yea, everyone that trusteth in them. O Israel, trust thou in Jehovah : He is their help and their shield.”<sup>1</sup>

Thus there is conveyed to the religious consciousness of the times a way in which, in the interest of true religion, religion must be disciplined. The God who is a spirit, and who, if He is to be worshipped at all, must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, is a God who must be clearly distinguished from nature, and from whom, consequently, nature must be just as clearly distinguished.

*The Rejection of Polytheism a Stage in the  
Secularization of Nature*

In the phase of the subject with which we have been dealing, we see religion in the act of purging out the lingering remains of its animistic origin. The task before it was that of driving home the truth that if God is to be thought of as God, nature must be treated as nature. But there is another aspect of the case, and the issue had to be fought out again on somewhat different ground. Not only had God to be distinguished from nature and nature from God, but a similar difference had to be established between God and man.

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxv, 5-9 : cf. Psalm cxxxv, 16.

In its more advanced stages animism shades away into anthropomorphism. This may be distinguished from the former as follows. Animism embodies the failure to abstract the idea of the personal from the natural world: anthropomorphism is the investiture of the natural with the characteristics of the personal. A special feature of the later tendency is the part played by the human form in this act of personification. God is definitely created in the image of man. This is a good indication of the difference between anthropomorphism and animism. Before anthropomorphism is possible, the confusions of animism must in some degree give place to a view of things in which the world of experience divides along a line that brings together on one side all that bears the form of man, and leaves in darkness, on the other, all that does not. The deities of anthropomorphic religion are personifications in a more definite and explicit sense than are the demons of animism (they are plastically more exact),<sup>1</sup> and the distinction is symbolized in the difference not only of form but of habitat. No longer are the gods sought in caverns and clefts of the earth, in the lurking-places of serpents and the ghost-haunted shadows. They are brought out into the light of day. Their abode is the bright sky and the mountain-top. The seat of their worship is in the "high places"; and even to the advanced spiritual consciousness of the Hebrew it was still natural to seek the divine aid by looking to the hills.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eduard Meyer on the emergence of the Egyptian gods: "Die Gotter sind Geister, bestimmte zu fester und dauerhafter Gestalt erwachsene Wesen aus der unendlichen Masse der Gestalten der Geisterwelt, etc." (*Geschichte des Altertums*, vol i, Pt. II, 3rd edition, p. 85).

There is one feature in anthropomorphic personification which claims our special attention. The process is one that lends itself to endless iteration. If primitive man saw gods everywhere because he was not able to think impersonally, the anthropomorphic religion of a later age fell into the same error through an abuse of the personalizing imagination. It is so easy to create new gods, when all you have to do is to imagine men and women endowed with superior powers and a special tutelary function. Thus in a sophisticated age, when the crude fictions of the traditional religion were unable to meet the pressure of a feverish life, the remedy was sought, not in a new and more adequate conception of the divine, but in an equally feverish multiplication of deities. There was a desperate effort to render the intrinsically primitive paraphernalia of religion commensurate with the growing complexity of a decadent civilization. In the annals of human superstition there is nothing more pathetically humorous than the struggle of the pagan cults to keep pace with the strained and jaded emotionalism of later times. Hence the excesses of late paganism, when to the already crowded pantheon of the Greeks and the Romans there were added legions of fresh divinities. In consequence of this we detect a certain obscuration of the strictly *anthropomorphic* character of religion. The individuality of the gods, modelled on fairly well defined human patterns, was lost in the crowd of obscure deities, and the result was something that suggests a return to the primitive, a counterfeit of animism. The tutelary deities are no better than familiars.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In proof of this analogy between an over-sophisticated and a relatively primitive religion cf. the passage from Augustine quoted below

From the time of the Apostolic Fathers to the time of Augustine there is no Christian writer of note who does not consider it necessary to devote many pages to exposing the extravagances of the mythologizing fancy. There was no function in life, no incident of the daily routine, no object of utility or of necessity, no instrument of pleasure, that had not its presiding genius. Indeed the process of proliferation extended to the minutest parts and to the most inconspicuous phases. Of this St. Augustine has given us a striking account. For such a common object as a door the Romans of his day required no less than three familiars, Forculus for the door itself, Cardea for the hinge, and Limentinus for the threshold. In the sphere of agricultural interests the farms were entrusted to Rusina, the mountain ridges to Jugatinus, the rolling uplands to Collatina, and the valleys

with Maspero's account of Egyptian religion in its earlier stages, *The Dawn of Civilization*, p. 81 sq. *E.g.* "The incredible number of religious scenes to be found among the representations on the ancient monuments of Egypt is at first glance very striking. . . . One would think that the country had been inhabited for the most part by gods, and contained just sufficient men and animals to satisfy the requirements of their worship.

"On penetrating into this mysterious world we are confronted by an actual rabble of gods, each one of whom has always possessed but a limited and almost unconscious existence. They severally represented a function, a moment in the life of man or of the universe."

This proliferation of deities is a phenomenon that meets us at the very dawn of history. In the case of the Egyptians the process was advanced in historical times by the conquests of the Pharaohs and the accumulation of foreign gods. Cf. *op. cit.* p. 85. It should be noted that the advanced polytheism of the Egyptians is not inconsistent with a pronounced monotheism. Cf. E. A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life*, chs. i and iii. "It is quite true", says this writer, "that the Egyptians paid honour to a number of gods, a number so large that the list of their mere names would fill a volume, but it is equally true that the educated classes in Egypt at all times never placed the 'gods' on the same level as God, and they never imagined that their views on this point could be mistaken" (*op. cit.* p. 84).

to Vallonia. For the successive stages in the growth of the crops there was a relay of divinities, Seia for the season when the seed-corn was still under the ground, Segetia for the period when it was above ground and formed straw, Proserpina for the germinating seeds.

“ Over the joints and knots of the stems [they set] the god Nodotus ; over the sheaths enfolding the ears, the goddess Voluntina ; when the sheaths opened that the spike might shoot forth, it was ascribed to the goddess Patelana ; when the stems stood all equal with new ears, because the ancients described this equalizing by the term *hostire*, it was ascribed to the goddess Hostilina ; when the grain was in flower, it was dedicated to the goddess Flora ; when full of milk, to the god Lacturnus ; when maturing, to the goddess Matuta ; when the crop was runcated—that is, removed from the soil,—to the goddess Runcina.”  
 “ And when the grain was collected and stored, they set over it the goddess Tutilina, that it might be kept safe.”<sup>1</sup>

The Christian polemic against paganism may be viewed as part of the struggle of monotheism against polytheism. But it is more than that. It is a demand that God shall not be sought where God is not to be found ; or (if this way of putting the matter seems to conflict with the Christian belief in God's omnipresence), it is the postulate that the divine nature is not to be localized, or degraded by purely local and topical associations. There is a way of apprehending nature and there is a way of apprehending God ; and

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, Bk. IV, 8 (edited by Marcus Dods).

a true knowledge of the latter implies that we do not confound it with the former.

*The Development of the Secular Attitude to Man :  
if God is to be thought of as God, Man must  
be thought of as Man*

No less important than the distinction between nature and God is the distinction between God and man. Anthropomorphism is a failure to grasp the relationship between the two. It commits the fatal error of deifying humanity ; and in the imaginative effort whereby it peoples its Olympus, man is the model and God the likeness. The result is that the distinction between the human and the divine is all but obliterated.<sup>1</sup> Yet this distinction is no less fundamental to religion than is the possibility of a personal relationship between man and God. For the purposes of religion man must be thought of as man, just as nature must be thought of as nature. In thus realizing his humanity, and defining it over against his consciousness of God, man necessarily places himself in a position of perpetual inferiority to the divine being. At the same time and by the same act of thought he discovers the great truth that humanity is a separate and in some sense an autonomous mode of being. It is possible for man to do without God if he so chooses, to build up for himself a universe of interests in which God is not

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the frequent attribution of the epithet ' divine ' to men in the Homeric poems. The hero Odysseus is *θεῖος*. So is the musician, Demodocus. It does not seem necessary to be a person of any great importance to be *θεῖος* or *ἀντίθεος*—*ἀντίθεος* *Θρασυμήδης*, *θεῖος* *Ἐχέφρων*. Even the goodly swineherd Eumaeus attains to that dignity—*θεῖος ὑπόβοός*.

included. Stranger still is the fact that this quasi-autonomy, this ability to leave God out of his life's plan, is the direct result and a symptom of the thing in man that relates his nature most closely to the divine. Man can ignore God by an exercise of the same power within him whereby he can bring his life most completely into harmony with God's will. To do justice to the complexity of the situation, the Hebrews and the Christians have found it necessary to invert the anthropomorphic way of looking at things ; and, instead of creating gods in the image and likeness of men, they have tried to think of man as created in the image and likeness of God. *The theocentric moment in religion implies an anthropocentric moment, which is the direct antithesis of anthropomorphism.*

In all this the Christian writers, like the Hebrew prophets before them, are indicating what God *is* by pointing out what He is *not* ; and in so doing they are showing that the first step in the process of finding the divine presence everywhere in the world of men and things is to distinguish the world of men and things from the divine being.

*The Gnostic Personification and Divinization of the Abstractions of Reason : a Real Knowledge of God demands that Nature be put and kept in her Place*

The same attitude was maintained in the face of a movement that was much more dangerous to the infant Church than was a decadent paganism. As early as the first century of the Christian era the anthropomorphic impulse appeared within the

Church itself as a tendency to personify not merely the forms and forces of visible nature, but also the abstractions of reason. What rendered this latter development so perilous was the fact that it embodied an attempt to render Christianity more satisfactory by bringing within its scope certain problems of which, in its primitive form, it had taken no cognizance. As the newly established religion became reflective, it was inevitable that the attempt should be made to apply its point of view to all problems, including such as had hitherto furnished a content to secular cosmologies. The motive was undoubtedly the desire for metaphysical completeness; but such seeming completeness could only be attained by a process of reconstruction quite out of keeping with the original fabric of Christian thinking. Never was such free rein given to the metaphysical imagination as in the second and third centuries of our era, and the result is a tissue of 'metaphysical romances', in comparison with which the *Monadology* of Leibniz, to which Hegel applied this designation, appears as a sober piece of empirical analysis. The Gnostic ideas which occur in the fourth Gospel (if, indeed, they are to be considered such) contain not the slightest justification for the extravaganzas of a Valentinus or a Ptolemaeus. Let us glance for a moment at one of these elaborate fictions, abbreviated and generalized from the already abbreviated narrative of Irenaeus.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Against Heresies*, Bk. I, chs. i-iv. Irenaeus does not always make clear to whom in each instance the different details and the variant versions are to be ascribed. Hence, as indicated in the text, the following version must be looked upon as very much of a generalization.

This (in part) is how second-century Docetism, of which Valentinus is the head and front, attempted to retell the simple gospel narrative.

In the beginning were two aeons—articulations of Godhead—Bythus (the Abyss) and Sigē (Silence). These two aeons, in connubial union, gave birth to another pair, Nous (known as Monogenes) and Aletheia, who in turn became the parents of Logos, the Word, and Zoë, Life. The progeny of this last couple included Anthropos and Ecclesia, with ten hypostatized abstractions (of which it will be sufficient to mention Mixis (mingling) and Syncrasis (blending)). A further brood of twelve derive from Anthropos, bringing up the number of aeons to thirty. Together these constitute the Pleroma, the “invisible and spiritual” Fulness of the Godhead.

And now, the stage being duly set for action, begins a cosmic drama. The youngest of the aeons, Sophia, contracts a mystical indisposition called enthymesis. This is a passion to comprehend the incomprehensible nature of the First Father. Her failure brings on a mental agony, and leads her to “stretch herself forward”, whereby the danger arises that she may be absorbed in the Father’s sweetness and “resolved into his absolute essence”. Presumably this would mean the break-up of the articulated harmony of the Pleroma; for we are told (following one version of the narrative) that the Father, by the aid of Monogenes, produces Horos,<sup>1</sup> the limit, known also as Stauros<sup>2</sup> or Fence, whose business it is to divide Sophia from her enthymesis.

<sup>1</sup> Simply the Greek word for a boundary or dividing-line. It is the expression used in the Aristotelian logic both for a ‘term’ and for a ‘definition’.

<sup>2</sup> One of the words used for the Cross.

By a characteristic turn of thought the enthymesis suddenly acquires a quasi-substantive and even personal nature. Along with its inherent passion it is detached by Horos, expelled and fenced off from the Pleroma, thereby becoming an imbecile, parthenogenic monster. Hereupon Monogenes, in accordance with the Father's foresight, and in order to avert a similar mischance in the future, gives origin to still another pair of aeons, Christ and Holy Spirit, whose function it is to "fortify and strengthen" the Pleroma.

When the work of pacification is complete, the aeons with one accord and with the concurrence of Christ, the Spirit and the Father, bring together what is most precious in them, and skilfully combining their contributions, call forth "a being of most perfect beauty", Jesus, "the very star of the Pleroma".

Meanwhile events are happening in the dark void without. The enthymesis of Sophia, a wild, formless, female thing, now known as Achamoth, perpetuates the agitations of her mother. Her desire is for the light from which she is excluded. In her unhappy state she is pitied by Christ, who extends himself through Stauros and imparts form to her.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On this point Irenaeus is decidedly puzzling. His words are : *τῇ ἰδίᾳ δυνάμει μορφῶσαι μόρφωσεν τὴν κατ' οὐσίαν μόνον, ἀλλ' οὐ τὴν κατὰ γνῶσιν*, which the English translators render : "imparted a figure to her, but merely as respected substance, and not so as to convey intelligence". This might do, were it not that a few lines further on the Greek text speaks of Achamoth as "having received form and become possessed of mind"—*μορφωθείσάν τε αὐτήν, καὶ ἔμφρονα γενηθείσαν*—words rendered by the same translators : "having obtained a form, along with intelligence". Obviously 'intelligence' will hardly fit both contexts. I imagine the phrase *ἐμφρονα γενηθείσαν* is meant to connote intelligence at its lowest (Latin version 'sensatam factam')—just enough to render a mental chaos, with the accompanying struggles, possible ;

Apparently, however, he only succeeds in making things worse; for upon his departure she strains herself still further to discover the light which has forsaken her, and in her misery gives voice to the cry I A O. Being baffled in all her struggles by Horos, she abandons herself to the manifold passions to which she is subject, grief at her failure to attain the desire of her heart, fear lest life itself should fail her as light has done, and a general perplexity. Finally a new indisposition overtakes her, a desire to return to "Christ who gave her life".<sup>1</sup>

It was in legends like this that the mythologizing fancy of the Docetae attempted to account for the physical world in the Christian scheme of things, by imparting a pseudo-cosmological significance to the concepts of Christian theology. The passions of Achamoth are "the substance of the matter from which this world was formed. For from [her desire of] returning [to him who gave her life], every soul belonging to this world, and that of the Demiurge himself, derived its origin. All other things owed their beginning to her terror and sorrow. For from her tears all that is of a liquid nature was formed: from her smile everything that shines; and from her grief and perplexity all the corporeal elements of the world."<sup>2</sup>

while the *γνώσις* mentioned implies knowledge in the higher sense—insight, enlightenment. Of this Achamoth is by nature incapable. *ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ δὲ τὰ πάντα. καὶ οὐ καθάπερ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτῆς ἡ πρώτη Σοφία καὶ Αἰὼν, ἐτεροίωσεν ἐν τοῖς πάθεσιν εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ ἐναντιότητα*; i.e. her ignorance was due not to a mere *alienation* from knowledge, brought on by passion, but to a natural antipathy. This natural ignorance, however, afflicts her as a passion. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Bk. I, ch. iv (tr. by Roberts and Rambaut, Ante-Nicene Library, vol v, p. 16). *Vide* Tertullian, *Adversus Valentianus*, ch. xiv.

<sup>1</sup> Tertullian, *Adversus Valentianus*, ch. xiv:

<sup>2</sup> Irenaeus, *op. cit.* p. 17.

Against such excesses of the metaphysical fancy, as against the excesses of the pagan imagination, the Christian Fathers of this age—Irenaeus, etc.—set their face relentlessly. The fusion of metaphysics and religion is in this instance seen to be no less fatal to the latter (indeed to both) than is the failure to distinguish God and nature ; and if a real knowledge of God demands that nature be put and kept in her place, the same thing is true of the speculative reason. In the minds of Christian writers of this age, it is true, there is not much room for secular metaphysics ; but it is none the less true that by separating religion from cosmological speculation, they showed that the latter, if it is to become possible at all, must be classed among the things for which a secular attitude is appropriate and necessary.

*Does this Discovery of the Secular in Nature and in Man spell Self-destruction for Religion ?*

In all these ways, then, the discovery of the secular is a service which mankind owes to religion, and a service which was first rendered *by* religion *in the interest of* religion itself. It would be a fundamental error to explain the origin of the secular standpoint by attributing it to the development of physical science in modern times. The secular standpoint is not the product of science ; science is *its* product. The part of the sciences has been to occupy the room so carefully prepared for them by religion in the interest of its own self-protection.

The question now forces itself upon us : does not such self-protection in the end spell self-destruction for religion ? Is it possible in this way to encourage

the establishment of a rival and autonomous interest without sacrificing the very claims which such a generous attitude was meant to conserve? A complete answer to this question will be possible only when we have raised and in some measure solved the problem of the validity of religion. It is in connection with this problem that we must finally adjust the relations of the sacred and the secular. But certain observations are within our reach at the present stage of the inquiry.

It would be safe to assert that no religion would admit the possibility of a purely secular interpretation of life taking the place of the religious. As we have seen, there are religions which lead logically to the abrogation of religion; but they do so not by abdicating in favour of the secular, but by a process internal to themselves. Where religion, as is the case with oriental mysticism, terminates in an act of self-transcendence, the construction that we must put upon the fact is not that religion has broken down, but that it has attained its goal. There is nothing more for it to do. The worshipper has attained to perfect union with the divine being. We see then that the concept of the secular, while it follows as an *implication* from the concept of religion, is not a possible substitute for the latter.

From this it will appear that the coordination of the religious and secular points of view constitutes a somewhat complex problem. In venturing a solution such as the present state of the inquiry will permit (that is, a solution in accordance with the concept of religion, but not involving the question of validity), we must assume further that religion cannot without stultifying itself place the secular

attitude alongside its own as a coordinate with equal rank or as an alternative with equal claims. And yet in a peculiar but perfectly real sense the secular is both an alternative and a coordinate. There is an experience which is specifically secular, as there is an experience which is specifically religious. Such, at least, is the assumption of religion in the phase with which we are here concerned. On the other hand, the jurisdiction of religion does not terminate with religious experience, but extends to human experience as a whole. In other words, religion, as it defines itself in the concept, is assumed to possess the key to human life in its entirety, and that whether the experience involved occurs in its religious or in its secular form.

The problem before us, then, is specifically this. How can the concept of religion be made to embrace at once the attitude peculiar to itself, as expressed in religious experience, and the secular attitude which religion demands as its natural and necessary antithesis? In order to answer the question, we must revert for a moment to the point at which, if our view is correct, religion has its origin—man's desire for life, and the sense of finitude which is at the bottom of this desire. This sense of finitude is an obscure and baffling thing; and while it is to it that religion owes its first impulse, it is equally true that religion could never have developed as it has, had not man learned to give new and more adequate meanings to the finitude which he has always felt to be the fundamental characteristic and predicament of his nature. In this process of education religion itself has furnished the leading motive, so that instead of saying that the evolution of religion

has been due to a developing sense of what it means to exist as a finite being, we ought to say that one result of a developing religious experience has been a deeper insight into the nature of finite existence.

*Man's deepening Conception of 'Life' leads to a deepening Sense of his Finitude, and thereby to a more adequate Apprehension of the Infinite and Unconditioned in the Religious Sense*

As we have seen, there is anthropological evidence for the belief that man's concern about existence is, in the early stages, very closely akin to a natural anxiety about sustenance and protection. It is never quite identical with any such anxiety. What the primitive man, like the man of later date, really wants is to *live*, and the desire for food and protection always falls somewhat short of this more highly generalized desire. If it were not so, it would hardly be correct to describe the desire to live as involving a sense of finitude. A mere consciousness of physical want, a sense of life as dependent upon conditions around us, implies only the consciousness of a *less* and a *more*, an actual *less* and an actual or ideal *more*. The desire for life, then, while it involves the contrast of an actual and an ideal, does not necessarily imply that this contrast shall assume the form of a distinction between the finite and an infinite. Nevertheless, until the contrast does assume this form, to the extent at least that the sense of want can be accurately described as a sense of finitude, the point of view is not strictly religious.

That the sense of want is actually identical with a sense of finitude is a matter of fact—a fact which

results from the way in which the desire to live relates itself to the animistic view of nature. In other words, the fact that in his desire for life primitive man does not address himself directly to the physical conditions by which he feels his existence limited and threatened, or upon which he conceives himself to be dependent, but rather to a personal power supposed to be capable of controlling the limiting conditions, guarantees our right to describe his mental condition not merely as a sense of want, but as a sense of finitude.

This may be shown as follows. A sense of something wanting implies as its correlate either a consciousness (however vague) of what it is that is wanting, or at the very least the consciousness of a possible state in which the sense of want would not be felt. But a sense of want related to the idea of a being capable of removing the limiting condition implies the thought of a being beyond or above the condition itself—that is to say, a being *unconditioned* with respect to the particular limitation involved. And when the sense of want is generalized, as it is in the desire for life, the correlate of the generalized want becomes the universally unconditioned source and protector of all life. This is the idea of the Infinite in the religious sense.

Of course it is not to be supposed that the religious consciousness rose at once to the height of this conception. The picture of the hungry—and angry—deity that can be appeased by an offering of food hardly suggests the self-sufficient god of a more developed religion. But even at the primitive stage, the deity was not thought of as dependent for existence upon the offerings of others, as man was dependent

for life upon the bounty of providence. The gods existed in any case. It was their nature to exist. They were the *ἀθάνατοι*, and immortality was their differentiating character. Their position therefore was always a privileged one in relation to the limitations by which human existence was hemmed in. As contrasted with man, they were the unconditionally existent.

Now the development of a secular interest in life out of the implications of religion itself is not merely, as we have described it, a stage in the process whereby religion advances beyond its animistic beginnings, it is also a stage in the process whereby it comes to a fuller realization of what man from the beginning is obscurely groping after in his desire for life—the power to define his position as a finite being in relation to the infinite. For, after all, to the extent to which his attitude is specifically religious, to the extent to which it differentiates itself from the mere cravings of nature, what is it that man really wants? Is it not simply, by the aid of the gods, to become, like them, superior to the limitations of his finite state? The condition at which he aims is not exhausted by the *de facto* satisfaction of his needs as they arise, or even by the indefinite prospect of such satisfaction. He wants to rise superior to the limiting conditions themselves.

This aspiration is apt to assume the form of a craving for complete and literal identity with the divine nature—a craving which, as we have seen, is at the bottom of oriental mysticism. We have seen, further, that such mysticism is the negation of religion. It follows that if religion is to survive, man must learn to see that the desire to be like the divine

being does not imply the apotheosis of his humanity and its characteristic finitude. What he should seek is not deification, but a relation with deity which will enable him at once to preserve and to transcend his finite limitations. How is such a twofold position to be attained ? Only by the clear realization of a certain fundamental duality within himself. There is that in man which must of necessity leave him for ever finite ; and there is that in him which, if the religious standpoint prevails, is capable of relating his finitude to an infinite being in such a way as to guarantee him against the consequences of *mere* finitude. Everything depends upon the relationship in question being correctly established.

### *The Secular Side of the Antithesis*

What this relationship in all its complexity implies cannot be considered here. For the purposes of the moment it will be sufficient to note that among other things man must be seen to take his place definitively as a finite member in a world of finite beings. As finite, his relationship is not merely with the divine being, but with finite things as well, and with the sum-total of finite conditions which at once determine and restrict his nature. A conscious realization of this aspect of the truth is at the bottom of the secular *view* of life, as an unconscious or unreflective adaptation to the situation is at the bottom of the secular attitude. The world of finite things with the relationships between them is the secular world. In this world man lives and moves ; and until its nature as such is clearly realized, the nature of the true infinite will remain more or less obscure. There will

be a constant danger of confusing it with the finite. To eliminate this tendency is among the functions of religion. Thus religion in this aspect is the progressive definition of the Infinite through a clearer realization of what it means to be a finite being, and the progressive realization of what it means to be a finite being through the clearer definition of the Infinite.

*The Finite and the Infinite : the Conditioned  
and the Unconditioned*

Our statement so far, however, suffers from excessive generality, and more especially from the vague use of the words 'infinite' and 'finite'. It can hardly be assumed that these terms are self-explanatory—more particularly when we remember that in the science of mathematics, which defines its terms exactly, there is quite a variety of infinities. Obviously an additional statement of some sort is called for.

The distinction between the finite and the infinite, if not identical with, is at least closely related to, another distinction—that into which the idea of *the conditioned* enters as one correlative, the other being more difficult to state. We shall devote ourselves chiefly to making clear what it means to be *conditioned*, and, without venturing a formal definition of the infinite, shall assume that the meaning of the latter term is to be found in the correlate of conditioned existence.

*The Kinds of Conditionedness: the Formal and the Ontological Conditions of Human Life*

When we speak of man's life as finite and conditioned, we may have in mind one or other (if indeed we do not have in mind *both*) of two things—either what might be called the *formal* or what might be called the *ontological* conditions of man's life. The former are typified by space and time and by the relations of space and time which we assume in any attempt to indicate the position of an object by reference to either. To be conditioned by such relations is merely to have a spatio-temporal character or to be amenable to the formal relations of space and time; and to say that the nature of anything is exclusively conditioned in this way is to say that it is definable, and exhaustively definable, in the equations that represent the range of all its possible positions in a spatio-temporal system.

A being so defined cannot be considered (from the standpoint of the definition) a *self*. It has no inwardness of nature, but only a network of external relations. In terms of these we have defined it, and apart from these we have no means of assigning it any identity of its own. To be conditioned in this sense is obviously something very different from being conditioned in the sense in which selves are conditioned, even if the conditions in question are purely formal. Furthermore, since the concept of religion depends upon the assumption that selves exist, it is clear that the conditioned existence in which religion originates must always be the exist-

ence of a self as subject to conditions. It is scarcely necessary to add that in the case of religion it is not enough that the self should *be* conditioned : it must also *feel* its conditioned nature as a limitation. This implies that even when the conditions in question are the formal conditions of space and time, it is not with these conditions alone that the religious consciousness is concerned : it is with these conditions considered in their bearing upon the further ontological conditions of selfhood. Thus the 'constitutional disability' involved in temporal existence would not be a disability if there were no factor but time to be reckoned with. Space and time are limitations in the sense intended, only in so far as they affect the existence of beings which are determined by conditions other than space and time. This leads us to a consideration of the conditions which we have distinguished from the formal as being ontological.

In the case of man these would include everything upon which human life is seen to be in any way dependent, that is to say, the actually existing *content* of space and time, in so far as this is related to human life, and in so far as the relationship is not altogether one of space and time. There are two types of existents which seem to answer to this description. In the first place, there are the constituents of the physical environment—whatever is studied in the sciences of chemistry and physiology, and is thought of *as actually existing*,<sup>1</sup> and as contributing to the metabolic and other processes by which the life of the organism is maintained.

<sup>1</sup> The point of this special proviso will appear later, when we come to deal with the problem of existence.

Secondly, there are existents to which, rightly or wrongly, we attribute the same fundamental character as we do to ourselves—the character of selfhood. Our relations to this last group, which includes all living things and probably a great many things which we have no reason to regard as living, constitute a highly distinct class of relations, differing in many important respects from the merely formal relations into which we enter, as well as from our relations to the chemical and physiological conditions that go to make up our environment. As regards physical, non-living things, it should be noted that they form an obscure intermediate division between the type of beings to which we confidently attribute selfhood and those to which, with equal confidence, we deny it. It will be seen at a glance that this intermediate province includes a vast array of the most heterogeneous objects, with which our relations are perforce external, but which, nevertheless, we find it difficult to conceive otherwise than as having some sort of internal nature. Whether or not our conjecture will prove to be eventually justified is a question which we have no present means of answering. All we can say is that the nature of everything which in the present state of human knowledge is not to be grasped from within, nor yet to be reduced categorically to a mere congeries of the external relations in which it stands, is highly uncertain. Taking the world of our knowledge as a whole, therefore, we see that it consists of a manifold of darkly apprehended existents, with two luminous poles—the pole at which everything becomes transparent and intelligible because everything is exactly definable in terms of concurrent relations, and the pole at which

the nature of selfhood is illuminated from within by self-consciousness.

*What it means to be a Conditioned Self*

Having indicated the distinctions which must be drawn before anything in the nature of a definite concept can be hoped for, we must now ask what it means to be conditioned in the sense in which this can be asserted of a self. To begin with, the conditions involved are not merely *defining* conditions, as in mathematics ; they are conditions of existence. In the absence of other existents no finite self can *exist*. Furthermore, in order that these existents should become the condition of actual selves, we must think of them as related to the latter in special ways, and not in *any* way whatever. It is here that formal relations become ontologically significant. Existents are ontological conditions of selves only when their formal relations permit. Oxygen cannot sustain life unless it is brought within reach of living organisms.

This suggests a second feature in the *conditionalness* upon which the finite character of selves depends. While the formal conditions of space and time in general must always be present, this is not the case either with the ontological conditions or with the precise spatio-temporal relations required in order to render them effective. The specific nature of the finitude which is characteristic of selves is largely determined by the fact that the ontological conditions of existence *can at times be wanting*. This involves a double dependence—a dependence upon the immediate ontological conditions, and a dependence

upon other ontological conditions which determine whether the former shall or shall not be available. In the same way the second set of conditions is dependent on a third, and so on *ad infinitum*. What we have described as man's *sense* of finitude acquires its religious significance largely as a result of this indefinite concatenation of conditions. To be the dependent member in a system of conditions, the extent and complexity of which are beyond computation, is to be finite in a very pregnant sense. Seen in the light of these limitless contingencies, the precariousness of life, which is the objective factor among the natural preconditions of religion, involves not only the idea of uncertainty, but more specifically of an uncertainty due to the stupendous multitude of the contingencies involved.

The concept of finitude, as this applies to selves, and more particularly to human selves, may, therefore, be defined as the *abstractum* (the general notion) of all the unknown dependencies of which existence is the last ; and the concept of the infinite (into the detail of which we shall not enter) is this same abstractum inverted, with whatever implications, ontological or other, such inversion implies. Man's consciousness of finitude carries with it a consciousness of its own antithesis—a cosmic sense. It implies the thought of a guaranteed universal order, for the simple reason that his feeling of finitude is nothing but the felt need of such ; and when he addresses himself to the divine being, he is (whether rightly or wrongly) interpreting the object of his thought ontologically. He is assigning existence to the infinite that he *thinks*.

*Conclusion*

To return to the question which furnishes the subject of inquiry in this chapter—the relation between the secular and the religious points of view—the knowledge which has to do exclusively with the formal conditions of existence is obviously a knowledge of the secular ; for religion is not possible where we are not dealing with selves. On the other hand, where the selves with which we are dealing are all finite selves, and where the conditions under which we view them and treat with them are peculiar to a manifold of such selves, our attitude is *not yet* religious. It is true that it may become so by developing certain implications ; but these carry us beyond the sphere of finite selfhood.

What has just been said applies to the world of humanity. Man's relationships with men constitute a field of inquiry which may be taken by itself, *i.e.* apart from the inquiry whether such relationships in the end imply anything more than themselves. Thus at the two limits of knowledge to which reference has been made—the limit to which mathematical and physical science belong, and that at which the relations of men are considered from various points of view, political, economic and ethical—we find certain more or less distinct bodies of truth stereotyping themselves against one another and against religion. With the group of the physical sciences we have less occasion for the present to deal at length. Their relation to religion is a subject which will come up for consideration when the question of validity is finally raised. But the concept of religion requires an

immediate examination of morality, in view of the autonomy which in the course of historical development the latter learns to claim for itself. The urgency of the question is due to the fact that both religion and morality deal with the relations of selves.

6

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SELF-CRITICISM OF RELIGION IN THE DEFINING OF ITS RELATIONS TO MORALITY

THAT the autonomy and therefore the secular character of morality must be in some sense granted we have assumed from the beginning. From the anthropological point of view the assumption is justified on the ground that religion and morality do not emerge together as historical phenomena or as undivided aspects of one and the same phenomenon. There is a phase of early religion, and there are aspects of religion in general, from which the ethical standpoint appears on the whole to be absent. On the other hand, in the later stages of development, when religion is either repudiated or ignored, morality is apt to assume an importance commensurate with the place vacated by religion. In fact the part played by the ethical interest is not infrequently that of a *secular substitute* for religious values.

#### *Science and Morality as Substitutes for Religion*

These facts are highly significant; but their significance cannot be understood until certain questions have been put and answered. To begin with, it is clear that among the reasons which normally lead in advanced ages to the repudiation of religion is the consciousness that religion fails to do justice to the secular truths of experience, as revealed both in the realm of scientific investigation

and in the moral life. It is equally clear that such a charge is directed more or less specifically against certain historical forms of religion, and that unless the concept of religion is inseparable from what is peculiar to these forms, the grounds for the repudiation must be considered inconclusive.

It is difficult to think that the repudiation would have been felt to be necessary if it had been realized that the secular point of view, as shown in the preceding chapter, results, not from the discovery of something in which religion has neither part nor lot, but from the internal dialectic of religion itself. Furthermore the very fact that morality and, it may be, science are made to take the place of religion, suggests that there is something in these akin to the latter—something which enables them to occupy the position and to fulfil the function previously monopolized by religious emotion and a supposed religious insight. Whether this is so is the question to which we must now turn our attention.

*The Autonomy of Science implies another Autonomy  
more fundamental than its Own*

The case of science must be disposed of in a few words. Strictly speaking, it is not science as such that is treated as a substitute for religion : it is a certain devotional attitude towards the idealized concept of science. Now it will be readily granted that a devotional attitude to science is no part of the content of science as such—that is to say, of the body of objective fact that constitutes what we call scientific knowledge. On the other hand, it may well be that some such attitude is an inevitable accom-

paniment, and a necessary motive, of scientific progress. If so, the fact should be frankly acknowledged. Only, it must be made clear that the devotional attitude which inspires the work of the investigator, but is not a part of that work, is a phenomenon which pertains to the life and conscious selfhood of the subject. As such it is to be explained by reference to the factors which are relevant to the assumption that such a life exists and has a meaning and value of its own. In a word, it is either a religious or an ethical phenomenon, in the sense that it belongs to that aspect of human existence to which either ethics or religion holds the key.

If there is anything that religion asks of science, it is that it should remain consistently secular (in the sense peculiar to itself), and that if it is unable to do so, it should at least refrain from throwing everything into confusion by failing to distinguish its own perfectly intelligible *matter-of-factness* from attitudes and regulative ideals which are utterly unintelligible on any matter-of-fact basis. The only legitimate inference from the devotional attitude that stands behind the strictly secular preoccupation of the man of science is that science implies the human observer and thinker, and that the autonomy of science thereby implies another autonomy more fundamental than its own.

### *How far is Morality Autonomous ?*

The issue now resolves itself into the question whether there is something in *morality* considered as such, and from the secular point of view of ethics, which qualifies it to take the place of religion and to render religion superfluous ; or whether, on the

other hand, in presuming to stand in place of religion, morality does not inadvertently (or it may be half-consciously) take over certain motives and attitudes from religion itself, thus stultifying its own claims to a complete independence. It should be noticed that the question is not as to the legitimacy of the secular viewpoint in morality—that we are prepared to concede as a possible implication of the religious point of view—but as to the legitimacy of certain claims which ethics frequently makes as to the nature and extent of its jurisdiction.

When we consider the mutual relations of morality and religion (so far as defined), the most obvious point of contrast appears in the fact that whereas religion is based on the desire for life, morality imposes a rule upon the life of desire. The question upon which everything turns is therefore the question : how is this rule determined ? To find an answer is the specific business of ethics. Hence it is with ethics that we have to do. The very fact that a theory of morality exists implies that the moral life can be considered as a well-defined and independent set of data. The existence of a *science of morality* is the crux of our problem.

*Two Fundamental Types of Ethical Theory,  
the Naturalistic and the Idealistic*

Beneath the varieties of ethical theory there is one fundamental difference which may be considered the touchstone of ethics. On the one hand there are the theories which attempt to derive morality by generalization from experience, on the other the theories which attempt to interpret experience in

the light of moral principles. This second view rests upon the assumption that there are principles of experience which are something more than contents of experience or generalizations from such contents. Both types of theory, the naturalistic and the idealistic, imply a threat to religion. The relegation of morality to the same category of nature to which everything else has already been relegated, is tantamount to the negation of religion; and the elevation of morality into a self-authenticating, autonomous set of principles tends to leave religion without a real place or function in human experience.

Now keeping in mind the limitations of our problem, we cannot hope to deal in anything like an exhaustive manner with either of these views; and we must seek to compress the subject so that only what is essential to the relation in which we are specially interested may appear. This will confine us to a few fundamental ideas, but fortunately the ideas in question are precisely those that are relevant to an analysis of religion.

To begin with, then, we shall assume that morality, if there is such a thing, has to do with human *actions*. It is that in an action which entitles us to describe it as either good or bad, right or wrong. In the second place, it is obvious that the thing about an action which entitles us so to describe it is not the bare fact that it occurs. In so far as they are considered merely as occurring, all actions are alike in character, and there is nothing to distinguish them in an ethical sense either from one another or from natural events.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of course upon reflection we perceive that there is a sense in which we do think of natural events as good or bad. The favouring

Nevertheless it must not be too rashly assumed that the literally *de facto* character of human actions has nothing to do with their moral quality. Even when we consider them as events that happen, the fact that they happen is never the only thing that characterizes them as events. There is the further circumstance, bound up with the first, that one event *differs* from another. We must consequently add to the conception of acts as events the respect in which events or actions differ ; and the respect in which they differ cannot be said to have no bearing on the distinction of good and bad. The difference between life-taking and life-saving is not a thing that does not matter, even if there are cases in which it is a moral obligation to destroy life and a moral delinquency to save it ; and while there may be no overt action of which it would be safe to say that it is in all cases ethically mandatory or the reverse, we can assuredly make some such assertion of *types of action*. Certain forms of behaviour are generically, if not distributively, moral or immoral. Thus there is ethical truth in the crude generalizations that would reduce morality to a code of categorical injunctions or prohibitions. The same is true of all attempts to catalogue the moral life in a list of cardinal virtues with their corresponding vices.

On the other hand, the disastrous results of a morality which takes its stand upon the overt deed are seen in the Talmudic Pharisaism on which we

wind which brings our ship to land is a good wind : the tornado which wrecks men's homes and destroys their lives is a bad wind. But here again, as in the previous case, there is nothing in the event considered as such—that is, as something that merely *happens*—to warrant any such distinction. Clearly we must search beyond the fact that events occur for the grounds on which the distinction of good and evil rests.

have already dwelt. Such an attitude gives rise to a casuistry of works which defeats itself in the very attempt to cope with the elaborateness of life and of life's situations. If the concept of morality begins and ends in men's acts, it must do so distributively, so that there will be a morality for every individual contingency. The element of universality will in this case come in only in the sense that the multitudinous injunctions of the law apply without respect of person. The agent is generalized. But to generalize the agent, and to specify what his reaction must be under every possible conjunction of circumstance, is to generalize the one thing on earth that is from the very nature of the case unambiguously individual, and to particularize the one thing about the individual that most of all demands the clarifying efficacy of general principles.

From all these considerations the conclusion follows irresistibly that for a clear and full apprehension of morality we must look beyond our overt deeds to something which will enable us to pass judgment upon them. Where is this something to be found? Two answers may be taken as typifying all others and as dividing the field of ethical theory between them. The naturalistic types of ethics—as in Hedonism and Utilitarianism—seek to derive the moral character of our acts from their *results*, the idealistic types of ethics from the *motives* which inspire them. The former are dealt with below,<sup>1</sup> in an Appendix. The latter, which more directly concern us, we may proceed to consider in some detail.

<sup>1</sup> p. 107.

*The Idealistic View*

There is one great difficulty in any attempt to state the idealistic position concisely, namely, that in the history of human thought the theory does not stand out with the same boldness of definition which characterizes Hedonism. This is due to the fact that when motives are invested with an intrinsically ethical character, and are thus assumed, as must now be the case, to be the fount and origin of all that imparts moral significance to our actions, it is implied that the concept of a motive is understood in a spiritual and non-mechanistic sense. The concept is therefore liable to all the defects of vagueness and variability which are apt to distinguish our attempts to formulate the nature of the spiritual life. Thus we must be prepared to find the concept of a motive enlarging its bounds in such a way as to include all that we mean by the expressions 'character', 'personality', 'a life-policy', 'a philosophy of conduct'; and in the general integration of ideas, motives are apt to be lost sight of, or to be reduced to a mere product of something much more significant than themselves.

Such being the case, it will be asked why we have chosen to characterize this point of view by reference to something in it that falls far short of the whole. The answer is that upon any spiritualistic interpretation of the moral life the ideal meanings involved must pass into conduct through the medium of motives. And furthermore it is this characteristic (or some analogous characteristic) which, by defining and isolating the ethical issue, produces that effect

of ethical autonomy that we are now investigating.

In one particular we have some reason to expect that idealistic systems will be free from confusion. There ought to be no tendency, such as we find in Hedonism, to identify the idea of a motive, conceived as the actuating principle of conduct, with the idea of physical causation. But even so reasonable an expectation as this is not always realized. Thus, for example, in the case of Stoicism, and in Spinoza's *Ethics*, we have an interpretation of the good life in terms of reason, and an interpretation of reason in terms of physical or mathematical necessity.

But apart from such specific difficulties, there are numberless ambiguities in the idealistic doctrine of motives. That this is so results, as has just been pointed out, from the close integration of the various aspects of the spiritual life, and from the fact that these aspects, like the various parts of an object seen through a microscope, come into view, historically speaking, at different moments and with varying degrees of prominence and precision. Now this aspect, and now that, is seen in focus, while the remaining aspects fall into the background ; and thus the weight of the argument is made to rest upon a variable analysis, which seldom brings into clear relief at any one time more than a part of the whole.

### *Its Beginnings in Greek Philosophy*

A good illustration of this, and one upon which we shall have to dwell somewhat, is furnished by the classical tradition in Greek ethical thinking. In the general alignment of views, Socrates and Plato are

assuredly among those who have given most notable expression to the idealistic interpretation of the moral life. Yet the part played by motives in their teaching is not at all obvious, and is certainly not obviously that of a defining factor.

The explanation is to be sought variously in the social outlook of the age in which these thinkers lived, and in the psychological insight at their disposal. Generally speaking, we may summarize their view of human nature and human life by saying that it is the product of two conflicting observations. On the one hand it was clear to them that the differentiating feature in man's nature, the significant fact about man as man, is his rational character. On the other hand they were equally impressed by the fact that human life as we know it is by no means the rational thing that we should expect.

This apparent contradiction is responsible, in the history of Greek thought, for the form assumed both by the problem itself and by the various solutions proposed. Beneath all variations we see that the main issue, theoretical and practical, was to adjust the confusion and disorderliness of life to the fundamental assumption that man is essentially an intelligence.

From the theoretical point of view the questions that arise are such as these. How is it that man, whose nature it is to know and to understand, is seldom (perhaps never) found to do either ? Granted that, as a matter of fact, man neither knows nor understands, on what grounds can we continue to maintain that it is his nature to do both ? In view of the limitless corruption of human nature and human affairs, how are we to determine the nature of the

ideal order which is the social analogue of man's essential rationality ? Why is this order not a realized fact, and under what conditions is its realization theoretically possible ?

The difficulty underlying all these questions may be measured by the stupendous interval between the actualities of the case and the ideal truth implied in the rationalistic interpretation of man's nature. In the case of Socrates, for instance, the issue may be stated somewhat as follows. If, as experience assures us, men really know nothing, what hope is there for a moral life which can only be realized in the form of knowledge ? How is man to pass from an ignorance that is complete to an insight which, unless it is equally complete, is no insight at all ?

Plato wrestles with the same problem, and in his mind, as apparently in that of Socrates, there crystallizes out a great idea which is the master-key to the situation. That idea is that there can be no solution except on the hypothesis that even in his state of ignorance and moral impotence man is all the while in possession of the knowledge which alone can liberate the spiritual potentialities of his nature. This knowledge is not itself a potentiality but an actuality. Behind the vapours that envelop this mortal life in a cloud of appearances, there burns within the soul the inextinguishable lamp of truth. The problem is to discover how this light, which has never been kindled in time, and which cannot go out, can be made to penetrate the surrounding darkness of a terrestrial existence.

This is a problem in the practical manipulation of human nature and of human life. Man must be placed in an environment, and subjected to a set of

influences, which will cause the light that is in him to break forth and illuminate his pathway. And so it is that for Plato, as for Aristotle after him, the moral life presents itself as a problem calling for a social and political solution. Morality is a product of civic organization, although it is true that, for Plato at least, civic organization is the external and relatively superficial aspect of morality.<sup>1</sup> The typical situation which serves to define the good life is not that in which the human individual, in the profound privacy, the incommunicable inwardness of his personal experience, is called upon to rally all the forces of his active nature to the support of what is best within him, and that, oft-times, in the light of a spiritual insight which, wavering and uncertain, is barely adequate to the needs of a moral decision. The good man, it is true, is required to subordinate his lower nature to his higher, but since that higher nature is reason, it is only necessary to secure for it the place which belongs to it by right among the powers of the soul. It is to be so secured by the aid of society. There is no place in Plato's or Aristotle's ethics for those desperate acts of personal faith in the right, whereby in moments of temptation, when the good has ceased to be even plausible, and the light within has suffered eclipse, the individual by an

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* the illuminating passage in Book IV of the *Republic*, when Plato after completing his account of the ideal state, and defining Justice, on the apparently inadequate basis of man's political relationships, as "minding one's own business and not meddling in many things", goes on to apply his conclusions to the life of the individual. Particularly significant are the words of page 443c, in which the concept of Justice is internalized, and the phrase τὰ ἐαυτοῦ is shown to refer not so much to man's overt actions (although these of course are included) as to "the inner conduct" of the soul. τὸ δὲ γε ἀληθές, τοιοῦτό τι ἦν, ὡς εἰκεν, ἡ δικαιοσύνη, ἀλλ' οὐ περὶ τὴν ἕξω πράξιν τῶν αὐτοῦ ἀλλὰ περὶ τὴν ἐντὸς, etc.

exercise of will is still able to maintain his ideals and save his soul from perdition.

Hence it is that the idea of morality as determined subjectively by anything so peculiar to the inner life of the individual as his motives, is on the whole strange to the Greek mind.<sup>1</sup> Even when it is recognized, as it is by Plato, that it is not the outward performance but the state of the soul that counts, the state of the soul is conceived as an induced harmony of powers rather than as a rectitude of character wrought out by each man for himself through numberless acts of the will, under the influence of that profoundly subjective sensitiveness to good and evil which we call conscience. The active and emotional side of human nature is not placed on a basis of equality with the contemplative.

It is a significant fact that there is no word in classical Greek, as there is no idea in the ethical writings of Plato and Aristotle, which exactly corresponds to our 'volition'.<sup>2</sup> The conception is indeed

<sup>1</sup> This would apply to Aristotle as well as to Plato, in spite of the fundamental rôle played in his ethics by the notion of an end.

<sup>2</sup> The Platonic *θυμός* is particularly enlightening in this respect. In the first place it must be acknowledged that Plato represents *θυμός* as a distinct faculty of the soul. It is analytically discernible as something different both from reason and from appetite. But in so far as it is thus discriminated it falls far short, in its connotation, of what we should now understand by conation or by will. There can be no doubt that when Plato thought of it as a distinct faculty, he had in mind a clearly recognizable but quite limited psychological phenomenon—namely, the exasperation or anger which a man feels against himself when his lower nature gets the upper hand of the higher, or even threatens to do so. From this point of view, righteous indignation is an indispensable auxiliary in the rational control of conduct. It should be noted, however, that such indignation is necessarily always on the side of reason. If it is to be identified with will, it follows that there can only be a will to good; and as a matter of fact the notion of a will to evil is alien to Greek modes of thought. Generally speaking, the conception of *θυμός* may be taken as expressing Plato's sense of the fact that there must be

implicit in Plato's and in Aristotle's ethical teaching, but it is obscured by the fact that it appears not as a power of the soul, but as the characteristic of certain actions, those, namely, that we distinguish as voluntary.<sup>1</sup> Thus the pregnant conception of man's life as rendered *either good or bad* by the same subjective factor that renders it active and practical was lost to the Greeks through the unfortunate circumstance which led them to treat the volitional aspect of man's nature from the quite inadequate standpoint of the distinction between voluntary and involuntary actions.<sup>2</sup> For Socrates man never does wrong voluntarily; and for Plato *θυμός* is always on the side of reason. It is difficult to see how upon such a view those fundamental characteristics of the moral life which we designate credit and responsibility can have any meaning at all.

### *The Idealistic View in Present-day Theory*

It must not however be supposed that the relative prominence accorded by modern ethical thinking to the active, volitional aspect of human life has given complete clearness of definition to the ethical theories which base morality upon motives. There remains a tangle of problems that have to do with the relation of motives to volition. The danger here is that of

some means whereby the theoretical faculty of reason may become practically effective.

<sup>1</sup> The distinction is that between *ἐκόν* and *ἄκον*. Of course this statement does not apply without modification to Plato, who, as we have just seen, does represent *θυμός* as a *δύναμις* or power of the soul; but we have seen also that this conception is not to be identified with that of will.

<sup>2</sup> How closely allied this distinction is to that of 'knowing' and 'unknowing' is obvious.

hypostatizing what are no more than aspects of a single complex fact, and so creating the artificial problem of discovering relations between entities that are not sufficiently independent to admit of such relations. Fortunately it is not necessary to enter into the mazes of this question. The purposes of our special inquiry will be adequately met by a simple statement of what is implied in the notion of an ethical theory based upon motives.

*What must be understood by the word 'Motive'*

To begin with, any such theory implies that by the word 'motive' we must understand something in the life of the agent capable of producing action. The standpoint is specifically activist. A motive is not merely a precedent phenomenon. It is an actuating force. Indeed it is precisely in the motivating factor in human conduct that the much-disputed meaning of activity appears most clearly. It may well be that the ensuing action, especially if it takes the form of bodily movement, is, when considered by itself, most readily interpretable from the phenomenalist (and therefore non-activist) standpoint of physics. But no theory which seeks to base the moral character of human conduct upon motives can hope to do so upon anything less than an activist interpretation of the latter.

In the second place, the motives which cause actions, and which impart to these their moral significance, must be conceived as in the nature of *spiritual* events. Their continuity with the bodily events which are their results is not the continuity of one physical event with another in a series of physical

causes and effects. They are not themselves movements in space and time, but active states of the conscious subject.<sup>1</sup> As to the precise nature of these states and of their content there is room for a wide divergence of opinion. Whether they assume the form of desire, or of reverence for law, or of the idea of a satisfied or completed self, is a question of high importance; but it is one into which there is no need for us to enter. For the purposes of this inquiry we shall assume that there is truth in all three views (and possibly in others), that motives may on occasion take any one of these forms, and that man's conduct may be determined either by what he desires, by the feeling he has for the sanctity and universality of law, or by what he conceives to make for self-realization. It is, however, necessary to add that if desire be accepted as a motive to action, it is desire in the sense which we try to make clear in our discussion of Hedonism<sup>2</sup>—that is to say, in the sense of desire for an object which is always in the end to some extent an idealization.

Thirdly, even in so highly generalized an account of motives as the present, there are certain features which must be added in order to complete the concept, and which impart to the latter a highly special connotation. For example, the motives which give their moral significance to actions must be motives of which the agent is more or less conscious. As such

<sup>1</sup> We shall see, however, that the sense in which the subject can be said to be conscious of them must be carefully defined. For the present the above statement must be taken in the sense that motives are active states of subjects or selves which are *capable of consciousness*. This capacity for consciousness is a circumstance that vitally affects the significance even of states and processes of which the subject may not be actually conscious.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Appendix, p 118.

they are mental states, which are (it may be in a very obscure way) at the same time mental objects. This does not by any means imply that in every instance we know *that they are our motives*, or that in any individual instance we know exactly what our motives are. There is such a thing as mistaking the motives from which we act, or not being able to tell why on some occasion we acted as we did. But there can be no such thing as a motive which does not imply a consciousness, however elementary, however devoid of moral understanding, of what it is that we are doing. When we think of ourselves as determined to action by certain motives, we think of our activity as one thing, occurring, it may be, in the form of a physical event, and of our motive as another thing, closely integrated, no doubt, with the overt act, but occurring within the psychical sphere of our experience. If the motive in question is a desire, the desire is a state of consciousness with an object, which is an idea. If our motive is regard for law, such regard is something which must be *felt*. If our action has its source in the idea of a satisfied self, then the motive has all the definiteness of a presented content or a formulated concept.

One further point remains to be stated. If it is the case that motives are definite states (implying contents) of conscious subjects, it does not follow that they occur separately like shots from a pistol. They may (and as a matter of fact do) occur in more or less complicated masses, and behind any individual act or any definitely discernible course of conduct there may be such a mass of motives. This means that our overt activity, phenomenally regarded, may be a much simpler thing than the

motives that inspire it. But in a moral sense it is not so. From the standpoint which is here the only relevant one, our actions will be ethically just as simple or as complex as their motives. The question that naturally arises as to the relation of the various motives which cooperate in determining any action or line of action is of course sufficiently important ; but all that need be said upon the subject here is that from the idealistic standpoint which we are now considering, the relationship must not be conceived as mechanical. There is therefore no analogy between the composition of physical forces and the composition of motives. What the idea of a *spiritual* composition implies is another question that need not detain us ; but the general presumption is that the answer to the question would involve the idealistic conception of a unity in difference. If so, the final product of composition, what we might call the motive mass, would have to be conceived not as a congeries of distinct motives but as a single comprehensive motive, in which the various component motives would assume the character of *contributory considerations*, bearing, each in its own way and with its own individual weight, upon the issue.

*Motives not Independent Sources of Ethical  
Value*

Such being the general features of this theory, we must now ask in what way it is sought to derive the moral significance of man's active life from the motives which determine his conduct. There can be only one answer to the question. Morality is a

resident attribute of the motives themselves. Man's actions are good or bad, according as they proceed from good or bad motives. This is in strict accordance with the Platonic theory of causation, which is the indispensable presupposition of an ethics based on motives—the theory, namely, that the character of the effect must resemble the character of the cause.

Now it is obvious that if motives are to be made responsible for the ethical quality of man's actions, it can only be on the assumption that we know what it is that distinguishes some of our motives as good from others which we think of as bad. And here it may be said at once that there is nothing in a motive, considered as such (that is, as actuating our behaviour), which entitles us to say: "this is a good motive", or "this is a bad motive". For example, it may be assumed that among bad motives are malice and the desire to defraud our neighbours. But we do not explain the badness of these motives by characterizing them as malicious or dishonest. Rather, dishonesty and malice are forms of evil to be explained by reference to more general conceptions, and are not in themselves capable of explaining the latter. Hence we must conclude that the goodness or badness of motives is not a self-explanatory characteristic.

For this reason, if for no other, an ethics based upon motives is unable in the end to make clear why we attribute moral significance to our acts. For such an explanation we must go beyond both our actions and their motives to something more comprehensive and more fundamental. The danger of treating motives as independent sources of ethical value is seen in the fact that such a procedure leads to the

bottomless abyss of casuistry, and to such extravagances of casuistic morality as are depicted in Pascal's exposure of the Jesuits in his *Lettres provinciales*.<sup>1</sup> A casuistry of motives, like a casuistry of works, ends by obliterating the distinction between good and evil altogether.

*Two Principles converging on One Comprehensive Conclusion*

From this quandary there is only one means of escape. We must cease to consider motives as independent sources of value, and learn to consider them as integral elements in a spiritual life which is larger

<sup>1</sup> A good illustration of the way in which ethical sanction can be discovered for any action whatever, by the specious device of *directing the intention* artificially to some unexceptionable motive, is found in the apology for duelling and assassination. In this way assassination can be shown morally superior to duelling. Thus a duel involves two persons, the challenger and the challenged ; and the principle laid down applies indifferently to either. In the defence of property or of honour it is permissible either to issue or to accept a challenge. The question however arises whether this is the neatest and best way of settling the matter. For though it is always possible to kill one's opponent in a duel without incurring sin, by the simple expedient, referred to above, of directing one's intention from the act of killing to the defence of honour, there is nothing to guarantee that one's opponent will succeed in keeping his conscience and his hands so clean. The great objection to a duel, therefore, apart from the risk of being killed in it, is that however pure one's motives, there is always the danger that one's adversary may incur the sin of intended murder. Hence in order to avoid placing a stumbling-block in the path of one's brother, it is advisable not to put the matter to the arbitrament of the duel, but to dispose of an enemy by the quiet and effectual method of assassination. Indeed, in the circumstances referred to, it is advisable to avoid employing the method of the duel if it is possible to settle the affair by privately killing our enemy ; for, by this means, we escape at once from exposing our life in the combat, and from participating in the sin which our opponent would have committed by fighting the duel ! " A most pious assassination ! " is Pascal's caustic comment. (Letter VII, tr. M'Crie.)

and more inclusive than even morality itself.<sup>1</sup> Lest, however, it might appear as if our inquiry has been altogether fruitless, it should be pointed out that it is of the greatest importance that we should look at our actions from the standpoint of the motives which determine them. Even if we have not yet succeeded in penetrating to the heart of the labyrinth, we have undoubtedly gained a valuable clue, and the argument enters a new phase when we see that morality, while it cannot be referred to our motives as to its originating principle, can nevertheless be redefined as that which, however derived, imparts to our *motives* the ethical significance which we attribute to our *actions* when we describe them as good or evil.

Before, however, proceeding to follow up this clue, we must pause for a moment to point out one further difficulty in the way of any theory which would base morality exclusively on motives. A very large part of our conduct is determined by causes which fall far short of that definiteness which motives imply. We are active beings long before we reach that point of development at which motives become possible ; and even in our mature state our conduct is constantly actuated by obscure instinctive complexes. It is indeed a moot question in what sense and to what extent we are entitled to attribute ethical character to actions so conditioned. But this much may be said. In so far as such obscurely conditioned action is the activity (and the conscious activity) of beings that are either potentially or normally responsible moral

<sup>1</sup> Of course it is not meant to impute the fallacy of isolating motives to the best idealistic thinking. The point of our contention rather is that the attempt to isolate *morality* and to consider it independently of religion (a tendency which is not absent from Idealism) is certain to result in such difficulties as are exemplified in an ethics of motives.

agents, to that extent activity of this sort cannot be viewed as altogether devoid of moral significance ; and while it may not be easy, in certain cases, to apportion our moral judgments, to deny all ethical character to that part of our conduct for which we are unable to account would lead to difficulties equally great.

In practice, indeed, our procedure is based on the simple and comprehensive principle just mentioned —namely, that there is moral significance in all behaviour that may be attributed to an agent whom, under ordinary circumstances, we should account morally responsible. Of course this is a rough expedient which cannot be taken as a principle for the exact purposes of theory ; but it is not difficult to discern the theoretical principle behind the practical rule. This may be brought out by converting the proposition that the behaviour of responsible agents is morally significant into the proposition that moral value is what characterizes the behaviour of responsible agents. This definition contains an important implication, namely, that it is one and the same thing that leads us to attribute moral significance to human behaviour, and the character of responsible agents to human beings. If so, it follows that morality is determined by something which, even in the absence of definite motives, forbids us to consider the actions of men as morally indifferent.

We are now in possession of two principles which, when taken together, define the position from which our next departure must be made. These principles are (1) that morality is that which (however defined) imparts a moral character not only to our actions as such, but to our motives, and (2) that morality rests

upon the same considerations which entitle us to impute human behaviour to responsible personal agents. These two propositions, it must be observed, converge to a single point, namely, that the ethical character of actions is determined by the fact that they are the behaviour of persons.

This is sufficiently clear as regards the second proposition. That the same thing is true of the first may be shown as follows. If it be asked what it is that determines the moral character of our motives, the answer cannot be discovered by relating the motives to the actions that result from them. For it is, to say the least, less true that the motives derive their ethical quality from the actions than that the actions derive their ethical quality from the motives. The only alternative is to refer the motives, not *forward* to their consequences, but *back* to the conditions which they presuppose. These conditions may be summed up in the fact that motives are nothing more nor less than the total state of a personality, when brought to bear, with a view to action, upon some concrete situation. The situation in question will be such as to combine certain elements of what is given with certain elements contributed by the agent himself in the form of an idea and a judgment of value. If this is so, then it becomes possible for us, in the last analysis, to dispense with the idea of motives, and to relate the acts of the individual, in their ethical aspect, directly to the personality of the agent. This does not mean that motives do not exist, or that the concept is either illegitimate or useless. It means that in a certain kind of inquiry the attempt to get at the root of the matter compels us to pass beyond the motives themselves to something more

fundamental, in the light of which they acquire their ethical significance and their place in the problem. In a word, it is of vital importance that we should distinguish between motives and sanctions, or (it may be), between motives and *sanction*.

### *Morality a Condition of Personal Existence*

Great confusion has been introduced into ethics by the failure to observe this distinction. The truth is that, however closely integrated, the two are fundamentally different ; and it is no more possible to derive the ultimate sanction of morality—that is, the principle that underlies the validity of moral judgments in general—from motives, than it is from results. As soon as this is seen, we are in a position to assign to motives their exact place in the moral life. It is not upon them that the distinction of right and wrong, of good and evil, depends ; but, granted this distinction, motives may be taken as signs whereby we may identify it. The same thing is true to some extent of results, but in a minor degree ; and the difference appears in the fact that whereas it may happen that a course of conduct is morally right although its results are disastrous, even if the results are fortunate no course of conduct can be considered *morally* right irrespective of the motives by which it is actuated.

The conclusion to be drawn from all this is that the ultimate nature of morality—that upon which in the end all such notions as credit and responsibility rest—must be looked for among the factors which determine the nature of personal existence. Morality is that character in the active life of persons

which enables their activity to give the fullest possible expression to what personal existence means. It is, however, not a matter of expression merely—not a flavour or effluvium which accompanies the practical transactions of life. Rather it is the condition upon which personal existence, as distinguished from existence in general, is alone possible. Just as existence in the widest sense of the term implies certain universal conditions—for example, time—so personal existence implies certain more specific conditions, and among these a first place must be given to morality. To the extent to which moral considerations are quite irrelevant, to this extent the existent in question cannot be considered as in any sense a moral agent, and to this extent its existence is not personal. Of course it must be admitted that so far as the finite and conditioned character of human life is concerned, there are many factors, physical factors, for example, which, if taken by themselves, are purely impersonal, and this implies that there are aspects of existence which, from certain points of view, even for men and women, do not come within the scope of moral judgment.

In morality, as in personal existence, there is an ideal element—something which, when the limit of attainment has been reached, still leaves us face to face with a mass of unrealized possibilities. On the other hand, there is something in the nature of personality which enables it to extend an ethical meaning to vast ranges of existence which, but for their implication with personality, would remain devoid of all such significance. Personality has the quality of subduing everything it touches to itself; and a moral attainment or a moral character may

be estimated by the result. Every moral venture is an experiment in the extent to which existence in general can be rendered ancillary to *personal* existence, and in some cases actually converted into the latter. Having regard to this possibility, it would be true to say that in its relation to personality, morality may be conceived as a transcendental condition, that is, as a condition which is presupposed in the very possibility of personal existence.

### *The Relationship between Morality and Religion*

It is here that the true relationship between morality and religion becomes for the first time apparent. Both have to do with the constitutive conditions of that existence which we call personal. Indeed, as the case has just been stated, our chief difficulty would seem to be that of distinguishing between the two. The distinction, however, is not really hard to state. If we take as our guiding thread the fact already sufficiently emphasized, that in a historical sense religion and morality do not develop simultaneously, we may represent the relation between them as follows. In its pre-ethical stages religion must be regarded as preoccupied with the problem of existence at a time when the conception of existence itself has not yet attained to that exactness of definition which personality and the ethical implications of personality demand. Such being the case, we cannot but regard the pre-ethical phases of religion as falling far short of what the completed concept implies. Religion is not truly religion until it has found and incorporated the moral life. From this point of view, and in so far as religion expresses

a practical attitude towards the ideal possibilities of existence, the moral life must be looked upon as its articulated content. From this it follows that while religion as an anthropological phenomenon may, and for a time actually does, subsist without the aid of morality, without such aid it cannot continue, and above all it cannot bring out the potentialities within it. Granted, however, what we have assumed from the outset, that it is in the nature of religion to develop, we see that when a certain point is reached the contact with morality is bound to occur. That this contact should not assume the form of an immediate mutual assimilation is not surprising. The independent development of the two factors involved could hardly have failed to render the problem of adjustment a difficult one; and hence the conflicts of that period in the history of religion when morality appears as an alien and critical onlooker.

The question, however, cannot be satisfactorily dealt with on a basis merely of historical maladjustment. What we have to consider is the much more significant fact that even after the contact has been established, and after religion has appropriated morality as its own specific content, the secular point of view persists and pretends to establish itself on a basis of theory. The crucial fact is the power of morality to maintain its position as an autonomous interest, claiming the right not only to exist independently of religion, but to furnish a clearly defined and independent set of data to the science of ethics.

In reply to the questions which arise out of this situation, the following considerations must be

emphasized. In the first place, we are bound by the conclusions of our argument so far to admit that when the question is one of sanctions, the pre-suppositions of morality are identical with those of religion. The principles upon which religion is founded are in the end the only principles capable of assuring to morality the normative standpoint, in the absence of which the distinction of good and evil, of right and wrong, is bound to disappear, upon analysis, in the category of fact.

*What justifies the Claim of Morality to an  
Autonomous Position*

But the question of sanctions is not the only question in morality. The moral life implies a highly articulated experience in which all sorts of considerations (among these, results and motives are only the most outstanding) are not only relevant but indispensable. Such experience in turn requires a technique. The development of personality and the realization of all that personal existence means demand a sustained preoccupation with the finite world of men and things, and the preoccupation of a finite intelligence with the finite implies a temporary abstraction of the attention from the divine being. Thus it is a necessity of religion that the human agent should not lose himself in continual preoccupation with God. From the direct contemplation of the Divine he must turn to the things of this world, and in so doing he must perforce differentiate his attitude towards the latter in a way that religion itself prescribes. He must, for example, learn the secular attitude to nature. In this act of personal

abstraction we trace the genesis and see the justification of the act by which morality abstracts for itself the claim to an autonomous position among human interests.

Morality then has the right to be considered independently of religion only to the extent to which we are able, and indeed are compelled, to abstract from the question of sanctions, and to concentrate our attention upon the specific forms which the moral life assumes in the varying circumstances of human life, and in the varying relationships to the finite content of experience which serve to determine these forms.

The position of morality in relation to religion is in some respects analogous to that of science: in some respects it is quite the opposite. The secular standpoint of science is, as we have seen, implicit in religion. That this is so is due to the fact that religion defines itself not only positively, by reference to everything that tells us what God is, but also negatively, by reference to everything that tells us what He is not. Science, therefore, from this point of view is the system of all that can be known about the world without taking God into account; and for the specific purposes of scientific knowledge it is necessary that the divine being should be kept out of sight. In morality it is otherwise. Here we must look with one eye upon the features of experience in which man finds the practical problems of life: with the other we must look for the sanctions of conduct to certain factors beyond the 'given' of experience.

*The Moral Sanctions, having their Source in the Conditions of Personal Existence, coincide with those of Religion*

The ultimate issue in morality turns upon obligation—what is implied in the assumption that human actions are to be viewed, not in the light of the results to which they lead, or of the motives from which they spring, but in the light of an inner necessity which determines what kind of results should be sought and what kind of motives entertained.

Now there is only one possible source of such obligation—an obligation extending over the whole range of conduct, both in its inner and in its outer aspect. Obligation is a corollary of the contractual element in personal relations. Man is *obliged* only to the extent to which he stands committed to a certain line of action by the very conditions to which he owes his existence as a personal being and his right to be considered such. Personal existence in turn is dependent not only upon the circumstances which determine the nature of existence in general, but by a specific set of ultra-physical relations—those which we designate *personal*. Whether such relationships exist, and what exactly they imply, are questions which can be answered only when we come to deal with the problem of validity. For the present we must content ourselves with pointing out that on no other set of assumptions are we entitled to the concept of moral obligation, and that this concept, strictly speaking, has no place in an ethical system that refuses to look beyond results, or is unable to trace the origin of morality to anything

more fundamental than motives.

In conclusion it must be stated that the conception of obligation, which I regard as bound up with the conditions of personal existence, implies something more than the mutual relationship of finite personalities. It is true that obligation occurs in the relations of man to man : indeed it is here that the idea finds its normal sphere of application. But the sphere of its application is not identical with the source from which it is derived. Of the latter we can only say that our moral obligations, while they assume forms which are determined by the varying possibilities of human intercourse, derive not from these possibilities but from the same metaphysical conditions which render human existence personal. Since these conditions are metaphysical, they are obviously not the product of human legislation or of human contrivance in general ; but since the thing which they condition is *personal existence*, they must contain the element of personal relationship. Thus it is in the idea of a personal relationship which, with reference to the conditions that render human existence personal, must be regarded as metaphysical and constitutive, that we find the source and sanction of moral obligation.

*Human Personality to be understood only in the  
Context of its Relations to the Supernatural*

It is obvious that if such a combination is realizable at all, it can be so in only one instance. There is only one relationship which can be regarded as metaphysically constitutive of personal existence—the relationship to a being that is a Person and is at

the same time the principle which makes it possible that other beings, through relationship to Himself, should assume the attributes of personality. The existence of such a being is, so far as the present argument is concerned, purely hypothetical, and the Being Himself must be looked upon as an *ens rationis*. None the less the assumption we are making is one with which the concept of obligation stands or falls. If the concept is to stand, it can only do so as a universal and ideal demand. This demand does not arise out of the circumstances that determine the form it shall assume, but is implied in the prior fact that there are circumstances in which obligations arise. The implication, when unfolded, amounts to this, that if any obligation whatever is to be thought of as binding, it must be on the ground that we relate all our activity, and ourselves with it as agents, not only to other finite personalities, but to a universal person—that is to say, to a person commensurate with the universality of the demand. Men are obliged to men because of one comprehensive obligation which accrues to them in their relation to a divine being. That supreme and comprehensive obligation we may describe as the *obligation to be obliged*, or the moral necessity of so conducting the whole business of life that in all our relations, both with material things and with our fellows, every one of us may assert his nature as a person, bound to give an account of himself, not to his peers, but to a universal personal authority, whom men call God.

Such an attitude is not to be treated as we treat a fact of nature, that is to say, as an event or a relationship between terms, something that occurs.

If we assume morality at all, we are bound to assume that obligation occurs, but when it does so, it implies something more than is implied in an event—namely, the act of personal self-assertion, of which the event is merely the phenomenal equivalent. The capacity to *act* in the fullest sense of the term is, as we shall see, one of the unique characteristics of personality: the obligation to act is a corollary of the capacity. As such it points beyond the natural world of finite things and all that relates man's nature to that world, thereby indicating that human personality is never completely understood until it is seen in the context of its relations to the supernatural. Man's obligations to his fellow men are either a fiction, an artifact of his own devising, or else they are the articulations of a single all-inclusive obligation which he owes to God. In the language of religion, morality is the will of God in man's practical life. Beyond this we cannot go; and to attempt to do so would show a profound misunderstanding of the situation. At the same time, it must not be supposed that in basing morality upon a personal will, we are basing it upon something arbitrary or capricious. We cannot go beyond God's will, because in it we discover the completely integrated personality from which every vestige of the arbitrary has been expelled.

We are now in a position to define morality from the standpoint of our present inquiry. Morality is the content of religion, in so far as this has to do with man's actions. It is also the content of the will of God, in so far as this has to do with man's nature as a person. Or, we might say, it is the system of obligations imposed upon man as a condition of his

right to be considered, on one side of his nature, and under the conditions of finite existence, from the same point of view from which we consider the nature of the divine being. What this means in theory we shall have to consider later, in our analysis of the idea of personality. What it means in practice is revealed to us every time we form a resolution or initiate action.

*The Problem of Sanctions to be excluded from  
the Province of Ethics*

The distinction between the practical standpoint of actual morality and the theoretical standpoint of ethics is here of fundamental importance. In particular, it is at the bottom of what might appear an inconsistency in our statement. We have maintained that the concept of obligation cannot be derived from any other concept; and at the same time we have sought to base it upon the will of God. Both statements must be accepted; and if they are viewed from the standpoint of the assumptions they imply, it will be seen that they do not conflict. To say that the concept of obligation cannot rest upon any other concept is merely to state the standpoint of ethics which, as we have seen, so long as it excludes religion, excludes the problem of sanctions. In a word, it is no part of the business of ethics as such to get behind the distinction of right and wrong. This distinction is as much a fundamental and necessary assumption for moral science as the phenomenon of motion is an assumption of physics; and the failure to realize this fact is at the bottom of the endless division of opinion which has given ethics such

an unenviable position as the science which makes no progress and decides no issue. On the other hand, when from the practical point of view we assert that moral obligation has its sanction in the will of God, we are not seeking to justify morality. We are expressing the fact that moral obligation cannot be derived from anything in the content or the technique of morality itself, but must be referred back to the conditions which entitle us to claim the prerogative of personality.

Exception may perhaps be taken to the assumption that the practical and theoretical aspects of morality can be thus distinguished, and more particularly to the exclusion of sanctions from the province of ethics. In reply to this, it should be pointed out that if the question of sanctions is excluded, it is so only because the procedure of ethics, as the scientific investigation of human conduct, considered by itself and apart from its relation to religion, implies such an exclusion. And furthermore if (as is assuredly the case) there are strong reasons for a comprehensive study of morality from the standpoint of sanctions, as from every other relevant point of view, the indispensable condition under which such a study would be possible is that ethics should, for the special purposes in hand, abandon the attempt to treat morality as an independent and autonomous interest. Such a procedure would of course imply the ultimate identity of morality with religion and of ethics with theology.

## APPENDIX

## THE NATURALISTIC TYPES OF ETHICAL THEORY

WHEN the ethical quality of our acts is sought in their *results* we have some one or other type of naturalistic ethics. The result of every action is either another action, or it is a state of the agent himself, or finally it is a complex conjunction of events in which human agents and other factors cooperate to produce what we call a 'situation'. Such, for example, is the economic or the political situation which is the *result* of cooperative and conflicting actions on the part of politicians, workers and captains of industry. 'Situations' in this sense may be left out of the present discussion, for from the standpoint of the moral judgment involved (that which assigns its ethical character to an action), a situation resolves into a complex of human states; and when the ethical justification (or the reverse) of any action or course of action is to be found in a resulting situation, this means that it is to be found in the states of conscious individuals. It makes these states better or worse; or perhaps it merely contributes to the agent's happiness or unhappiness. We conclude, therefore, that the results of actions, to which we sometimes look for their moral character, are comprehended in other actions and in states. The problem therefore comes to be: what is there in actions and states that enables them to impart a moral character to previous or contemporaneous actions?

*Hedonism and Utilitarianism*

The answer which follows naturally from this method of inquiry is again two-fold. The thing which imparts ethical quality to actions is either utility or pleasure. From this point of view, actions are good if they are useful or if the states to which they conduce are pleasant states

As between the doctrines of Hedonism and Utilitarianism the logical primacy must be accorded to the former. Utility is a conception which in the end is unintelligible apart from pleasure. It therefore depends upon the conception of pleasure in a way in which that conception does not depend upon it. Usefulness is either a relation in which actions and things stand to one another, or else it is a quality which accrues to actions and things in virtue of a relation in which they stand. In either case the implication is that the factors to which we ascribe utility in the last resort derive their designation from states which we describe as pleasant. The theory, therefore, upon which we must concentrate our attention in this abbreviated analysis is the theory known as Hedonism.

### *The Strength of the Hedonist Position*

Briefly stated, the position of Hedonism amounts to this. The validity of every value-judgment derives directly or indirectly from the concept of pleasure. This principle, when analysed, dissolves into two propositions : (1) pleasure is good ; and (2) our right to attribute goodness to anything else depends upon the truth of the first assertion. That is to say, there are things and there are types of behaviour which conduce to pleasure : in so far as this is so, we are entitled to apply to the latter, by a kind of ethical metonymy, the same normative character which belongs by right of nature and inalienably to pleasure itself.

Let us try to understand these propositions separately and in relation to each other, interpreting them as far as we are able in the sense of the Hedonist himself.

To begin with, then, pleasure is good. What are we to understand by this statement ? It is the altogether praiseworthy desire of the Hedonist to remain within the realm of verifiable facts, and to exclude everything in the nature of mystical values or ideal standards which do not rest upon the solid basis of experience. By the statement that pleasure is good he therefore gives us to understand that

nothing more is meant than the empirically ascertainable fact that men desire pleasure.

Here then at the very outset we have a remarkable instance of the way in which the oracular in our value-judgments can be done away with. The word 'good' does not connote some transcendental criterion, but is a brief symbolic expression for a familiar fact of experience. Incidentally we find ourselves in possession of a sorely needed definition. On the same indisputable basis of fact, the good may now be defined in the simplest possible terms as "what men want". Thus we get rid of the unintelligible assertion that men desire a thing because it is good, and we substitute for it the perfectly intelligible assertion that we call a thing good because men desire it. This latter assertion, moreover, in addition to the merit of intelligibility, has the great advantage of covering all the *de facto* truth contained in the former. For instance, if we say that men desire a thing because it is good, we identify the content of the good with the content of that which is desired; and this is precisely what we do in the amended statement.

So much for the meaning of the word 'good', as this appears in our original proposition. As regards the term 'pleasure', there can be no difficulty. Pleasure is a state of the conscious subject with which all men are more or less familiar. It is one of the infallibly identifiable data of experience. To assert that pleasure is good is therefore to assert that the unmistakable thing called pleasure is a thing which all men desire.

So far the Hedonist has been remarkably successful in confining himself to the realm of actual experience. Pleasure is a *state*: that men desire pleasure is a *fact*. Of anything further there is as yet no suggestion; and the point of view which has been established precludes certain awkward questions. It might be asked, for example, whether, admitting that men desire pleasure, they are *right* in desiring it? Such a question is so obviously based on a different set of presuppositions that it loses all meaning when applied to the fundamental proposition of Hedonism. From this

point of view all questions of right have become questions of fact, and to question a right is merely to ask for further analysis of the circumstances of the case. This, however, is a request which is thoroughly in keeping with Hedonistic presuppositions, and to which, in effect, the Hedonist is presently compelled to address himself. The compulsion is laid upon him not merely from without, but also by the exigencies of his own position.

The additional circumstances which the Hedonist must take into account may be summarized as follows. States of pleasure do not always occur : sometimes their place is taken by states of pain. These latter are states which the conscious subject does not desire ; or, to be more exact, they are states towards which he experiences a positive aversion. None the less he does sometimes have them. Thus, desires are things which are not always realized. All this, once more, is matter of fact, guaranteed by the actual experience of men.

Another group of facts for which experience is our guarantee has to do with the relative strength of pleasures and of desires. Pleasures differ in degree of intensity. Actions and situations—indeed, some pleasures—contain less of the characteristic quality of pleasure than do others. The counterpart of this fact is the fact that desires differ in strength, and that our desire for pleasure is proportional to the intensity of the pleasure in question. Irrespective of any other consideration, we desire the intensest pleasure which the nature of the circumstances permits.

At this point, however, a complicating consideration makes its appearance. Whatever may be the truth about desire, it is certainly a matter of fact that men do not always *choose* the most intense pleasures. Indeed, they habitually choose pleasures that are less intense. How is this to be accounted for ? One possible explanation would be that choice and desire do not always coincide, and that these two things, therefore, cannot be taken as an index of one another. This is an explanation which the Hedonist would probably reject. He would do so on the ground of experi-

ence. Not only is it contrary to all that experience teaches us to suppose that man acts in opposition to his desires, but this hypothesis would furthermore require that we discover some other, and quite unnatural, motive of human action. No such motive can be discovered without going far beyond the plain facts of the case. Consequently we have no right to any such hypothesis. All that is required in order to establish a complete harmony between the facts and Hedonistic theory is a more adequate survey of the *facts* themselves. This is easily achieved. For experience shows that intensity is not the only respect in which, from the purely quantitative point of view, pleasures differ. They differ also in duration, and in the extent to which they are fraught with the possibility of future pleasure. Obviously these considerations are sufficient to account for the otherwise puzzling circumstance that men do not always choose the pleasures that are most intense.

*Difficulties which Hedonism has to meet*

But in adopting such an explanation, it is of the utmost importance that we should not go beyond the data; and it is just here that a tendency to do so begins to make its appearance in Hedonistic theories.

Let us see if we can discover what the facts do and do not entitle us to assert. It should be premised that when we come to the variously qualified situations of actual life the facts are no longer clear, and that such simple generalizations as that men desire pleasure are of less assistance than might have been expected.

So far then as the evidence of experience is available, it seems to be a fact that men sometimes prefer a violent though short-lived pleasure to one that is less intense but more enduring. That the opposite is sometimes the case seems to be a fact for which there is equal warrant in experience. This duality in the data, obscuring, as it does, the content of the fundamental principle that pleasure is what men desire, is a serious predicament for Hedonism. It is no

longer possible to apply the principle as it stands, and the Hedonist is compelled to adjust his theory to various possibilities which come into view at this point. If the good is what men desire, and if, further, men are now seen to prefer sometimes the intenser to the more enduring pleasure, sometimes the more enduring to the more intense, it is possible to identify the good with the object of one desire or with that of the other. As a matter of fact, Hedonism divides upon this issue, and we have a Cyrenaic and an Epicurean form of the doctrine.

The difficulty here is that the choice of one alternative to the exclusion of the other implies the abandonment of the strictly empirical point of view which is so essential to this theory. If the sole criterion of the good is what men desire, then we have no right to maintain that what some men desire is good and that what others desire is bad. Experience cannot be taken to refute experience without resort to just such an ultra-empirical criterion as Hedonism repudiates.

There remains a third possibility—that, namely, of generalizing the two types of experience in such a way as to make it appear that whatever be the superficial differences that divide our practical choices, in the last resort all men desire the same thing. Now there is one category which immediately suggests itself as meeting all the needs of the case—the category of quantity. If the conception of intensity and the conception of duration can be brought together under the common denominator of quantity, then it looks as if the original generalization might be restored in the form of a statement that men everywhere desire the *maximum* of pleasure attainable with a minimum of pain. In the history of this theory the last-mentioned solution commonly goes along with the Epicurean form of the doctrine.

A little thought will show that it is scarcely possible to take this final step without assuming not only the facts of experience, but a certain right to manipulate these facts through processes of interpretation. So far as experience is

concerned, it is at least doubtful whether man always desires what will bring him the maximum of pleasure. On such a question no conclusive data seem to be available; and to assume that because man desires pleasure, he must always desire a maximum of it, would seem to be like assuming that because he desires food and drink he can never have enough of either. What we do know is that just as men do not always *choose* the pleasures which, taken individually, are most intense, so they do not always *choose* the course of conduct which on the whole produces the maximum of pleasure.

The explanation of the Hedonist is of course that man does not always know what course is likely to produce the maximum. He chooses according to his intelligence and experience. Thus the crux of the situation passes from the fact of pleasure to the act of computation, or, as Plato called it, the art of measurement. Men differ in their ability to estimate the amount of pleasure which on the whole may be expected from the different modes of living and the different attitudes to life. The difference between one man and another is thus a difference of intelligence, and intelligence is defined, in a highly restricted sense, as the capacity for accurately calculating the consequences. It makes no difference that the Epicurean professes to find the greatest satisfaction, not in the life of sense, but in the tranquil life of contemplation. The significant feature is not that he finds his pleasure in what is fine rather than in what is coarse, but that he insists that there is no intrinsic distinction between what is coarse and what is fine.

### *The Defects of Hedonism*

It is not the purpose of this hurried excursus into ethical theory to determine the merits or demerits of Hedonism, or indeed of any particular theory of morals. All that is intended is to indicate the result of treating morality as a thing which can be considered by itself and independently of religion, and it has been necessary, with the same end in

view, to subject the opposite type of theory to a similar scrutiny. Within the limits of this restricted purpose, I shall proceed to point out what appear to be certain fundamental defects in Hedonism.

That there is such a thing as a maximum of pleasure is doubtless a theoretical possibility ; but it is a possibility which cannot be handled in a practical way upon a basis of actual experience. This is particularly true of experience as understood by the Hedonist himself. The difficulty is that it is psychologically impossible to compute the maximum as a joint product of intensity or duration. This in turn results from the fact that there is no fixed unit of intensity. Without such a unit, computation, except in the vaguest sense, is out of the question, and can be practised only by a resort (in this case a quite illegitimate resort) to all sorts of ideal factors. As a matter of fact, Hedonism, beginning on the solid ground of actual experience, ends in the rarefied atmosphere of an experience that is purely hypothetical. It deals in supposedly typical instances, where it is hard to determine what exactly is typical ; and it has no means of putting into effect the practical device which, in the experimental sciences, is the very keystone of the empirical method—namely, verification.

This can be easily shown. The Hedonist decides, on a supposed basis of experience, that one course of conduct rather than another is calculated to produce the maximum of pleasure. He accordingly proceeds to act upon his intelligent “anticipation of experience”, and receives a certain return in the form of an emotional state. If he is right in his calculations, this return should be the maximum of pleasure which he must be supposed to have had in mind at the outset. But how can he determine whether or not it really is so ? Only on one condition—namely, that the maximum in each instance should be (as in a physical or chemical experiment every quantity is) a measurable and verifiable sum, and that, further, the sum of anticipated pleasure should coincide with the sum actually realized.

But obviously the idea of a maximum of pleasure is not the idea of any specific amount, so that the very notion of verification in the ordinary sense becomes irrelevant.

In this case two possible courses are open to the Hedonist. Either he may *assume* that the return of actual pleasure, whatever its amount, is the maximum of which the conditions admit ; or else he may decide to repeat the experiment, choosing this time some course of conduct which he had previously rejected.

The former procedure implies the complete abandonment of the experimental method, and involves the glaring anomaly of treating *as a verification* whatever results may accrue from the experiment, whether these results coincide with anticipations or not. That such a position is psychologically possible is due to the limitless vagueness and elasticity of the concept of a maximum.

The second procedure appears at first sight more promising. Its superiority lies in the fact that a certain willingness is here shown to recognize the vagueness of the idea of a maximum, and to subject it in individual instances to the additional test of comparison. Should the second experiment result in a greater sum of pleasure than the first, the obvious conclusion is that a revision is called for in the anticipations of experience. In such a revision experience itself becomes the principle of adjudication. So far so good. The position as now stated enables us to get over the difficulties connected with the idea of a maximum. By the latter we need now understand only the pleasure that is known by experience to be greater than any other within a well-defined field of competing alternatives. It may be conceded that there is no fixed unit of pleasure, and that the notion of a maximum in any exactly computable quantitative sense is an impracticable ideal. But it is a matter of actual experience that some activities or states are more and some less pleasurable, and that we do as a matter of fact discriminate between the two kinds.

The maximum then is to be found in the most pleasant states which we experience, and while we cannot give it an

exact numerical denomination, we can with considerable exactitude say which of a number of states is most pleasant; and if there are two or more states of which we cannot say this, then the logic of the situation would seem to require no more than that we should treat them as moral equivalents. Thus Hedonistic ethics which, when viewed from the standpoint of theory, becomes hopelessly vague and hypothetical, is made to appear quite reliable and adequate when the question is placed on a practical basis. The absence of practical difficulties is as remarkable as the presence of theoretical ones.

Unfortunately the attempt to rehabilitate Hedonism as a working theory of morals evokes an entirely new set of difficulties. Behind these is the fact that as soon as we attempt to treat pleasure not merely as a state, of which we have experience, but as an object of practical *interest*, as soon as we come to look upon degrees of pleasure not merely as an experienced difference between pleasurable states but as a matter of positive *concern*, we have, whether we know it or not, changed our ground, and with it our point of view.

That we experience pleasurable states is matter of fact. It is matter of fact that we experience the difference between one state and another, and that we desire states which are pleasant. But when we assume what is called a practical attitude to pleasure and pain we are doing something more than experiencing such states or a desire for them. In the first place, we are trying to discover the means by which states of pain may be avoided and states of pleasure realized. In the second place, we are actually putting (or are thinking of putting) the means in question into effect.

Now when we say that we are doing or are trying to do anything, we are not stating a fact of experience in the same sense as when we describe ourselves as experiencing a state of pleasure or the desire for such a state. The elements which enter into what we call action in the familiar human sense are two in number: (1) what we want, and (2) what we do: and the relation between these

elements is described by saying that what we do is determined by what we want. The question before us, therefore, is the question how what we want can possibly determine what we do. In other words, it is the question as to the relation between desire and the ensuing action. In order to understand what this implies we must devote a little space to the analysis of desire.

*The Naturalistic Analysis of Desire, and the Consequent Interpretation of Morals*

It is implied in the naturalistic and empirical standpoint of the Hedonist that the relationship just referred to should be interpreted in accordance with the general character of causal determination in the world of nature. That is to say, the desire is interpreted as a cause and the ensuing action as an effect, in the sense in which causes and effects are supposed to occur in the causally conditioned world of space and time. Unfortunately for the Hedonist, the nature of physical causation was little understood when his theory was formulated ; and his attempt to explain the relation between desire and action as a relation of causality is vitiated at the outset by the fact that his practical point of view is one which is quite alien to that from which physical causation is conceived.

In the world of nature events are observed to occur and to follow one another with a certain uniformity. But an observable event is not an action. It is merely a phenomenon. Now the phenomenalist standpoint of natural science is not possible for the Hedonist so long as he maintains his attitude of practical interest. It is true that he is at liberty to abandon that attitude ; but if he chooses to do so, he abandons his theory as an ethical view of life.

The implications of the naturalistic point of view, applied rigorously in the field of morality, are worth noticing. In the first place, desire must be interpreted as we have interpreted pleasure—namely, as a state which occurs, and which has certain recognizable characteristics that

enable us to identify it and to distinguish it from other states. The ensuing action must be interpreted along similar lines as something that occurs and can be observed to do so. Only, in this case the phenomenon is too complex to be brought entirely under the designation of a state. It is a combination of states in the conscious subject with physical motions in the body.

In both instances we are dealing with observable phenomena, and with nothing more. This implies that the relationship between the phenomena in question is merely an observable relationship of sequence; and when we describe desire as a cause of action, all we mean (or are entitled to mean) is that states of a more or less familiar type, which we call desires, are observed to precede motions of a more or less stereotyped character and the states that go with these motions.

That the Hedonist means much more than this goes without saying. He means, for example, that the desire actively produces the deed in which it ensues. This conception involves a complete reinterpretation both of the action and of the desire, as well as of the relation between the two. The desire is no longer thought of as a state which is observed to occur. It is not a mere *object* of consciousness: it is a state of consciousness *having an object*. Moreover the object is not in this case an object of observation; it is an *object of desire*—by which we must understand that it is an ideal content of the psychical state in question. The reason why it is not *observed to occur*, in the sense in which a phenomenon of nature is so observed, is that, as an object of desire, it frequently, perhaps usually, does not occur simultaneously with the desire, and sometimes does not *occur* at all. An object in this sense is quite obviously not an object in the sense in which nature may be said to consist of observable objects.

The ideal object of desire is an indispensable feature in the Hedonistic interpretation of desire itself. It is so not only because such a conception is implied in the practical point of view, but because it is by means of this feature

that the Hedonist connects the state of desire causally with the ensuing action. This is a point that requires special attention. Before the causal relationship can be rendered intelligible, it must be reinterpreted in the light of a profoundly different relationship—namely, that of *means and end*. The exact nature of the connection between the two relationships may be expressed by saying that the desire is conceived as the cause of the act only in so far as the act can be viewed as an empirically ascertainable means to the realization of the desire. In other words, the concept of a cause is quite illicitly converted into the concept of a motive. Desires *cause* actions in the sense that they furnish the latter with their motives ; and it is only in so far as he conceives desire as the motive to action that the Hedonist applies the concept in the sense of a *cause*. He would never think of describing a certain course of conduct as caused in this way, unless he could see that the conduct was connected in the mind of the agent with the object to be attained, and that (as has been stated) in the characteristic manner in which a means is connected with an end. The idea of a motive thus includes much more than the idea of desire, considered as a state of mind followed by an action. The action is thought of as motivated by the desire, not because such desires are perceived invariably to precede such actions, but because such actions are thought to be *conducive* to certain desired results.

We now perceive wherein the practical attitude differs from the theoretical. The difference depends upon the fact that what from the theoretical standpoint appears as a cause, when viewed from the practical standpoint appears as a motive. But the difference goes deeper than this. The good, as we have seen, is defined by Hedonism as that which men desire. That is to say, the conception is a generalization of what is supposed to be mere matter of fact revealed by human experience. This generalization implies the theoretical point of view. But the problem of Hedonistic ethics.(as of all ethics) is to present the good, thus theoretically defined, as a matter of practical concern

to men.<sup>1</sup> It is the problem not only of determining the nature of the good by generalization from the facts of experience, but of showing (still in a purely theoretical way) how the life of the individual may be adjusted practically to the generalization.

Now just as in the previous case the transition from the purely theoretical to the practical interest implied the transformation of the conception of cause into that of motive, so here the same transition implies another fundamental transformation. This may be shown by following out the various steps in the logic of the process.

Beginning with the general conception of *what men desire*, I must, in order to attain the practical point of view, assume that on the whole my personal desires as an individual conform to the universal type. In place of the concept of what men in general desire, I therefore substitute the concept of what *I* desire. In the next place, as an individual *practically interested* in my desires, that is to say, interested in their fulfilment, I begin to consider the means conducive to such a result. But obviously the question of means is utterly devoid of significance except in so far as I discriminate between one means and another. Such discrimination, however, implies a similar discrimination in the end to be achieved. Thus the quite general and formal concept of *what I desire* is incapable of entering into the practical relationship of means to end until it has been defined in terms commensurate with the specific difference in the means. And so, having defined the good in terms of my desires, I must further define my desires, if the latter are to be presented as a matter of practical interest. At the same time it is essential that in any such attempt I should avoid the fallacies that are likely to accrue from over-particularization. The danger is that of identifying the object of my desires with something in the local and

<sup>1</sup> This of course does not mean that the motive of ethics is practical rather than theoretical (it is not the business of ethics to make men good), but only that in its theoretical treatment of the good it presents the good as that with which men are concerned.

temporal circumstances that accompany the latter. Any such identification will be sure to result in a definition similar to those which mark the intermediate steps in the Socratic "induction"—a definition, that is, which fails to cover all the facts of the case. What is really wanted is a characterization which will impart definiteness to the formal concept, and will at the same time prove equal to the universality which the concept implies.

*The Hedonist fails to account for the Type of Judgment  
that enters into Desire*

If we are to believe the Hedonist, pleasure is the one possible characterization of the universal object of desire. The good is that which I wish, and that which I wish is, under every diversity of circumstance, pleasure. The situation as it now stands is therefore as follows. The agent in the case, whose function it is to sustain a practical attitude towards his desires in general, finds himself confronted with the problem of realizing a specific desire for pleasure. His preoccupation is with the means, and his problem is to discover means which will conduce to the object. As a practical man and an agent, he must steadily and consistently view his desires in the light of the relation which an end bears to a means. It is here that the crux of the situation occurs. For the moment we consider pleasure as an end to be realized, we cease to regard it from the *de facto* standpoint of theory as an actually existing, empirically observable object, and consider it rather as an *ideal* object which somehow we judge to be desirable. Of course it is not *as an ideal* that we desire it: what we desire is to convert the ideal into a present actuality. But the possibility of this attitude implies the further possibility of assuming a critical attitude to the empirically present. Thus the nature of desire is not exhaustively expressed by the consciousness of any object actually present in experience plus the consciousness of a certain mental state called desire. In addition to these factors there must be another, which is an act of

judgment; and the content of that judgment—namely, that a particular ideal object is desirable—is not identical with the empirically announced fact that we desire it. Thus between the fact of desiring anything and the *desirability* of that which we desire there is a difference which does not fall within the limits of the empirical, but rather serves to determine these limits.

It may be objected that by the desirable we mean nothing more than a generalization of what we find by experience to be desired. If so, desirability is merely the characteristic of all desired objects as such. This may be at once admitted; but it does not really affect our contention. For the point at issue is not what meaning may be attached to the word 'desirability', or what class of objects we have found to be desirable, but what is implied in the fact that we desire anything whatever. And surely it would be a strange psychology that would make it impossible for us to consider anything desirable unless we had had past experience of similar things and had found that we desired them. Is it not a characteristic of human nature that we desire that of which we have had no experience from which to generalize? *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*. But even if it were not so, in order really to desire objects like those we have desired in the past, we should have to formulate a judgment other than the judgment that we have desired them. The judgment in question is not a generalization of facts experienced in the past and projected inductively into a hypothetical future. In its essential nature it is not a judgment of fact at all—although the facts of experience may have something to do with rendering it possible. Strictly speaking, its form implies not only a consciousness of want and discomfort, but an act of thought whereby we attribute this discomfort to the absence of an object known (it may be by past experience) to produce a certain kind of satisfaction. Neither the consciousness of the discomfort, however (which is merely a mental state), nor the thought of the object calculated to dispel the latter (which is a judgment of *fact*) can be taken

as expressing what we mean when we say that we desire the object. The meaning in question includes an emotional condition which is not the feeling of discomfort or of want, and a judgment that is not the judgment of fact enunciated above. The additional element implies that the object thought of in the way indicated is related to the feeling of discomfort from a perfectly new and unique point of view. It is not enough to say that the object is seen to be capable of satisfying the desire. That would still leave the object something *thought about* in a judgment of fact. In order to bring out the real character of the situation, we must represent the object not merely as an object of thought, but actually as the object of *desire*. This direct reference of an object to an emotional state (or to a state of consciousness in which the emotional rather than the intellectual aspect is the strictly relevant factor) constitutes the uniqueness just referred to, and is the differentia in judgments of value. We may recapitulate this somewhat involved statement by pointing out that it is impossible for the Hedonist to give a practical significance to the *de facto* generalization that men desire pleasure without at the same time idealizing the pleasure that men desire.

*The Hedonist is also faced by another Predicament*

In this way there is created another serious predicament for the Hedonist. The situation may be analysed as follows. If on the one hand we begin on a basis of pure fact, we *ex hypothesi* cut ourselves off from value; for it is impossible by any process of generalization or manipulation to extract values from facts. If, on the other hand, by a legitimate extension of the conception of experience, we include values along with facts in the realm of the empirical, the value so included (since we are forbidden to assign to it anything in the nature of an ideal character) must be interpreted as the value of that which we are actually experiencing or which we have experienced in the past. For example, the empirical value of pleasure is the value of the pleasure we have and

not that of the pleasure for which we yearn perhaps in vain. In other words, it is not the value of that which normally constitutes the object of desire. For our desires constantly exceed the limits of actual experience.

*Two Courses open to the Hedonist*

In view of these difficulties there are again two courses open to the Hedonist. He may frankly accept the characterization of his theory as an idealization ; in which case he is no longer on purely empirical ground (as he conceives the latter) ; or else he may revert to what he supposes a strict empiricism ; in which case he is no longer able to relate the fact that man desires pleasure (or indeed that he desires anything) to the postulates of the practical life. This latter alternative is tantamount to the complete abandonment of the ethical point of view.

The maintenance of this standpoint, therefore, implies the element of idealization, which we have already seen to be a differentiating feature in religion. This of itself at once suggests that religion and morality, however distinct in their historical development, are in their defining concepts profoundly at one. If religion originates in the idealization of existence, and morality implies that human life, considered as a practical problem, is a system of idealizations, then it would seem that the one can hardly be defined without some reference to the other. If, however, the standpoint of naturalistic ethics be still held to, and it be contrasted with the idealistic position discussed in the preceding chapter, the fundamental difference will appear in the fact that whereas for Hedonism motives determine what we shall do, but do not determine the moral character of our conduct, for the rival theory the moral character of the performance, as well as the performance itself, is determined by the motive. Thus in the latter case the factor which determines man's actions in a causal series coincides with the factor which determines their moral quality ; in the former case these factors do not coincide.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### CHRISTIANITY AND THE COMPLETED CONCEPT OF RELIGION

THE point has now been reached at which we are able to gather together the various elements which seem absolutely fundamental to religion. The resulting concept will, from the nature of the case, be highly general, and will leave much to be added in the way of commentary and elaboration ; but the remaining features are such as imply some sort of answer to a question which has not yet been raised—the question of validity. Before we can hope to complete our inquiry, therefore, it will be necessary to deal in a critical fashion with the ideas which have been made use of in our inquiry so far, and which now appear in the completed concept of religion. In particular, we must subject the ideas of existence, personality and experience to a thorough scrutiny, and having determined what we have a right to mean by these ideas, we must ask what right we have to believe in them. Our immediate business, however, is with the completed concept.

#### *The Completed Concept of Religion : Review of the Conclusions thus far reached*

(1) From all the evidence that has been adduced we must conclude that religion begins and ends in the preoccupation with existence. Such preoccupa-

tion is inevitable in beings like ourselves, for whom existence is not merely a thing to be observed in another, but a thing of which we are directly aware in ourselves—a thing that goes with the fact that we ourselves exist. This fact is the mainspring of religion, not only in the sense that it is the original actuating principle in the historical religions, but also in the sense that it determines the forms which our concern for existence shall assume, as religion develops under the influence of growing experience and insight.

(2) In this process the most significant feature is the progressive idealization of life, and the deepening sense that existence is valuable only in virtue of the factors which render it personal. To exist in any sense which falls short of what it means to be a person is not to exist at all in the sense of religion.

(These conclusions have been reached and sustained in the face of a very pronounced phenomenon which appears in the history of religion itself, and seems to point in the opposite direction—the drift, namely, towards the impersonal, combined, as it sometimes is, with the cult of self-annihilation. The justification of our attitude is to be found partly in the fact that although this opposite tendency undoubtedly has its origin in the same impulses in which religion originates, and must consequently be designated a religious phenomenon, the tendency is in the end destructive of the religious life. What is wanted to save religion is the idea of personality, not as a limitation, but as a condition of the fullest being. Whether such an idea is possible remains to be seen ; but certainly the idea, whether justified or

not, enters into the concept of religion.)

(3) We may say then that the nature of religion is determined by the desire to realize existence in the ideal form suggested by the possibilities inherent in personality. These possibilities culminate in the idea of spiritual communion between the finite individual and a divine person, a communion at once contemplative and practical, and fraught with the perpetual revelation of all that personal existence implies for the finite subject in his relations with the world of material things and with other finite subjects. Morality must therefore be included in the concept ; but it is not everything. There remain the ordinances by which the finite subject attempts to prepare himself, through the agency of an emotionally active ritual, for the more direct forms of communion with the Divine. Such directness of communion is not yet fully possible under the limiting conditions of human experience, but a fuller measure of it is anticipated as the final implication of a religious life sustained or stabilized by the habituation to a devotional attitude.

(4) Religion implies further the reality of the finite world, in relation to which man's attitude must be specifically secular. Doubtless this is a hard saying, but it must, at this point, be added to the concept. There is a fifth, and final, factor in the completed concept of religion,<sup>1</sup> but before it can be properly formulated the difficulties involved in this fourth factor must be dealt with at much greater length than in the preceding discussions. This, too, as we shall find, brings up for further discussion the relation between morality and religion.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. below, p. 152.

*The profoundly Necessary, yet Dangerous, Character  
of the Secularist Attitudes, and of the Techniques  
and Organizations in which they have come to  
be embodied*

The chief among the difficulties to which we have just referred is that of reconciling the rights of the secular with the claim which religion is equally bound to make, that God is all and in all, and that religion itself is everything in life. This much, however, is clear : that God's nature, while comprehending the sum of existence, must have a definiteness commensurate with its reality. Definiteness is not attainable without the element of negativity. If God *is*, then there must be something that God *is not*. Only, this something must not be conceived as outside of or apart from the divine being. The secular character of finite things rests upon the fact that we cannot, without falsifying the nature of the Divine, identify these literally with God. In their direct matter-of-factness we identify them, as we do all physical objects, with themselves, by viewing them in a finite system of their conditions ; and we relate ourselves to them by establishing between them and ourselves another finite system of conditions. In this way we get out of them a reaction to some limited portion of our nature, and not to the totality of that which constitutes us persons. Or, to be more exact, in relating them to our personality as a whole, we are forced to avail ourselves of certain mechanical or quasi-mechanical intermediaries, the sense-organs, for example, which restrict the meaning, and detract from the inwardness, of the resulting experience.

Finite objects represent what can be seen with the eye or rendered otherwise amenable to a one-sided, or, it may be, a many-sided approach, but in any case to an approach which has always in it something fugitive and incomplete. To compare such sallies into a world where every contact is partial and intermittent, with the sustained intimacies of personal communion, where we relate our being as a synthetic whole to other similar beings, is to miss the fundamental distinction on which the concept of religion depends.

From this point of view we may define nature as the system of all the factors to which we cannot relate our personalities in their synthetic completeness, and God as the Being to whom we cannot in the end <sup>1</sup> relate our personalities in any other way. The implications of these statements are far-reaching. They imply, for example, a deep cleavage between God and nature, as revealed in the varying attitudes of the finite subject to each. Furthermore the very possibility of relating ourselves to nature in the way described implies a certain naturalness in ourselves, an incompleteness of integration, which places us in the realm of the externally conditioned, rather than in that of the internally complete. At the best our personalities are unfinished.

<sup>1</sup> The limiting phrase is necessary in order to allow for the fact that in our approaches to the divine being we do actually avail ourselves of intermediaries. In so far as these are finite and physical, we are of course compelled to relate ourselves to them directly in the same piecemeal fashion in which we relate ourselves to the finite in general. Such relationship, however, never expresses the whole truth. Behind the literalness of the piecemeal contact is a meaning which is not identical with the *de facto* relationship, but is ideal and universal. It is so in the sense that it implies another *order* of relationship—the relationship between *selves*. The point is one which will be dealt with later.

Again, since our relations with our fellow-mortals are prevailingly one-sided and superficial, we must conclude that a large part of human intercourse conforms to the natural type of relations. And in so far as these relations reduce inevitably to the well-defined categories of physics and biology, of economics and political science, in so far as they are amenable to a purely statistical consideration, to that extent the impersonal factor predominates.

At this point, however, an important difference, within the concept of the natural itself, falls to be noticed. There are natural relations which come to us with the physiological conditions of our being—those, for example, which connect us with our parents and our offspring. But there are others which we establish for ourselves artificially.<sup>1</sup> This is so in all those combinations by which man tries to organize his existence in a technical sense, by interposing a legal, political or economic structure between him and his fellow-men. The tendency to conduct human affairs more and more upon the basis of class-organization is one of the striking phenomena of our modern civilization, and reflects man's profound distrust of his neighbours, and the failure of the social systems based on man's regard for man. The tragedy of human existence in these later days is nowhere more marked than in the desperate efforts that are being made to improve the conditions of

<sup>1</sup> There may seem to be something paradoxical in the idea of establishing natural relations artificially. From our present point of view, however, the antithesis of the natural and the artificial is subordinate to the antithesis of the natural and the supernatural. From the standpoint of this fundamental distinction (which has still to be justified) the minor difference falls entirely within the concept of the natural.

human life by ceasing to treat human beings as persons, and by trying to fashion their lives on patterns derived from a study, not of the individual, but of the mass. Not that such methods are illegitimate or inexpedient. They are in fact profoundly necessary. The social structure demands the handling of men in groups, and calls for an elaborate technique. But in so far as the maintenance of existing structures and the more-or-less forcible creation of new combinations become the all-absorbing business of life, in so far as the individual is lost outside the limit of his technical habits, there is a corresponding loss of those supreme meanings that have their seat in personality. Of all the forms of wanton self-destruction there is none more pathetic than that in which the human individual demands that in the vital relationships of life—the relationships which imply reciprocity and mutual understanding—he be treated not as an individual, but as a member of some organization.

The full significance of this cult of organization is apt to be lost upon those who are most competent to deal with its detail. Our mechanical civilization has been so successful that it has blinded us to the real danger inherent in the system. Even its critics have usually advocated an increased application of the very methods from which the evil springs. What they fail to see is that as society integrates itself more and more upon a basis of political and economic organization, the general effect upon individual character is not always that of an integrating power. On the contrary, increased organization may retard the process of integration in the individual. The reason for this is that all such efforts

in the field of public affairs, however disguised and complicated by idealistic motives, rest in the last resort upon a special instinct or group of instincts, rather than upon man's nature as a whole. The forms of activity called for, the interests appealed to, bear unequally upon the funded resources of the soul; and this means the consolidation of character around one set of impulses, to the neglect and atrophy of others no less vital. The acquisitive instinct and the instinct of pugnacity in particular are kept in a constant state of over-stimulation.

The results are not confined to the life of the individual, but make themselves felt as flaws in the selfsame organization from which they spring. They appear in those deep and unbridgeable fissures that divide the human race into rival and potentially hostile societies. For it is characteristic of the instincts that while they furnish an excellent principle for the organization of larger or smaller groups, it is impossible to organize humanity as a whole upon any such principle. The limitations of every political and economic combination reflect the narrowness of the basis upon which they rest. Hence it is that every society organized for acquisition, aggression or self-defence, finds itself confronted by other societies organized for the same purposes. From this there issues a state of universal tension, broken at intervals by war in one or other of its many forms, and by the disintegration which war inevitably brings in its train.

In the associations of employers, and in labour groups, we see what human life becomes when organized around the instinct of acquisition. In every instance the issue is the same: in every in-

stance men are found endeavouring to secure the fullest outlet for their acquisitive propensities by restricting an identical instinct in others. The same thing is true of political organization. Every state represents a vastly complex co-operative effort of many men towards many ends, an effort, however, which in the last resort rests—with the organization itself—upon the instinct of pugnacity. This is a truth that is frequently obscured by our propensity to universalize the idea of political organization in a fictitious entity called 'the State'. We forget that 'the State' is an idealization, and that much of the ideal character with which we invest it pertains to it only in an ideal sense. In particular we tend to overlook the highly important circumstance that every actually existing commonwealth owes many fundamental characteristics to the fact that there are other commonwealths which threaten its existence. Every state is in the first place a fighting organization. It comes into existence by differentiating itself from other combinations—a process that is almost always accompanied by war: and it maintains its identity and its integrity by the same act whereby it maintains its army. Indeed the possession of a separate army is hardly less important than the possession of a separate constitution, for the purpose of marking off one political society against another. The army is the permanent expression of a nation's will to resist every infringement of its claim to distinct selfhood, and the occasional expression of its will to dispute the selfhood which another nation claims.

These remarks are not meant to be taken as a criticism so much as an attempt at an analysis. As

such they are, of course, far from being a complete statement of the truth. Even admitting that the various organized forms of human association, with the functions that accompany them, do not of themselves—that is to say, as organizations—conduce to the complete integration of human nature, it does not follow that men's lives and interests need be absorbed in the performance of these functions and the maintenance of these institutions. In fact, it is to be expected of a well-organized society that it will find means of binding the citizen to it without depersonalizing him, and that, by relieving him of much mechanizing drudgery, it will set him free to find the larger life that makes for a completed personality. In this case it becomes possible for the individual to carry a well-integrated character into the sphere of his economic relations and his political activity.

Even at the worst, there is something in human nature that sets steadily in the direction of integration, in spite of all retarding influences. Man's impulses are not all of the type represented by acquisition and pugnacity. There are instincts that express themselves no less powerfully in a regard for others; and there is hardly a situation in life which brings men into contact with men, whether in the immediacy of personal relations, or through the medium of social arrangements, in which the self-regarding instincts are not subtly complicated with altruistic tendencies. Apart from this the organization even of exclusive groups upon a basis of acquisition or some other form of self-assertiveness presupposes a bond of sympathy and confidence and a capacity for unselfish co-operation within the group itself. And,

finally, the processes by which organization is sustained, issue in a profound inward transformation of the crude instinctive elements, of which the desire to organize is the product.

*The Natural Processes of 'Evolution' and 'Sublimation' as contrasted with Religious Transformation in 'Second Birth'*

The sublimation of the instincts is guaranteed by the psychical facts of man's nature, and by the processes of natural development. In his work on human nature Professor W. E. Hocking has given a remarkable account of the way in which, through the repeated failure of a fundamental instinct to produce the satisfaction desired, new horizons of moral possibility are opened up, until in the end the dialectic of experience transforms the primitive impulse to destroy into the spiritual impulse to save.<sup>1</sup> The importance of such natural and inevitable processes of sublimation can hardly be over-estimated. Yet the processes in question, whether considered individually or collectively, as the moralization of an instinct or as the moralization of a character, fall far short of what religion demands and offers as the supreme possibility for man. Sublimation of the instincts is only the natural mechanism through which religion undertakes to effect a change far more comprehensive and fundamental than sublimation—the transformation of human nature, not in a piecemeal and fragmentary fashion but as a whole. For such a transformation no expression is

<sup>1</sup> *Human Nature and its Remaking*, see chap. xxiv, on "The Dialectic of Pugnacity", pp. 164 *seq.*

adequate except that implied in the notion of a second birth.

Here, then, we reach a culminating conception, whereby religion defines itself against any secular view of nature in general, and of human nature in particular. The slow processes of development which appear to guarantee the gradual moralization of man's life in one or other of its aspects, through the natural evolution of the individual and the race, are, from the religious point of view, vitiated by several inherent defects. They do not guarantee the salvation of the individual ; in their operation they are peripheral rather than central ; they do not represent a regeneration of the complete man by a radical transformation of his being from within. In the order of natural development, man's conversion, which it may take many generations to effect, is the uncertain product of a piecemeal sublimation of the instincts ; from the standpoint of religion the sublimation of the instincts is the assured product of man's conversion. What religion offers, then, is a transformation of human life that does not have to await the slow processes of nature ; a transformation, moreover, that has about it a completeness and a finality that nature never guarantees.

The relation between the two states or processes, evolution and regeneration, is not necessarily one of mutually exclusive alternatives. Each is compatible with the other, and it is possible in a sense to regard each as working for each. The one thing which is definitely ruled out by the presuppositions of religion is the assumption that natural truth can be made to take the place of religious truth. As viewed from the standpoint of religion, the relation

between the realm of nature and the realm of spirit is an asymmetrical relation, of such a sort that, whereas religion claims a certain jurisdiction over nature (even while acknowledging something autonomous in the latter), it refuses to regard such jurisdiction as reciprocal. In a word, while freely accepting all that natural processes can offer in the way of refining and sublimating the instinctive life, religion refuses to accept such sublimation as the equivalent of a process peculiar to itself, and known to the religious consciousness as regeneration.

*Further Discussion of the Relation between  
Morality and Religion*

These relationships acquire a peculiar significance when viewed in the light of their ethical implications. We have seen that morality must be conceived as at once the content of religion and as an independent, and therefore secular, system of values and obligations. - Furthermore, the jurisdiction which religion claims over the moral life is of such a nature as to leave morality very much what it is outside that jurisdiction. There is much of seeming paradox in this. The difficulty comes out in two typical phenomena for which there seems to be abundant evidence in the facts of human experience.

In the first place, there is the case of the good man who is either indifferent to, or who positively repudiates, the claims of religion. It can hardly be denied that such men have existed. So far as it is possible to form a judgment in such matters, it appears to be true that some of the noblest and purest lives in history have been led by men to whom

religion was nothing, or was no better than a pernicious superstition. In the second place, it is a notorious fact that the regenerative process does not always produce (and certainly does not immediately produce) that complete moral reformation which religion holds out as its practical consequence. The new man may retain much of the old Adam. It is possible to be saved and still to be a sinner. Indeed, the saved may be ethically inferior to the unsaved. To all appearances the conversion of a good man leaves him morally very much what he was before ; while the conversion of a bad man does not always alter the conditions which make the attainment of moral perfection for him an exceedingly dubious enterprise. It is difficult to see how it could be otherwise. For religion can hardly alter the nature of morality, and among the things that make morality what it is we must include the element of effort, and the uncertainty of success which effort implies.

Such being the case, it looks as if religion did not make very much difference to the facts of moral experience. And if instances of sudden and complete reformation can be pointed to as the direct result of conversion, similar consequences can be traced to other causes as well—a sudden shock, the power of a new affection, the revival of latent influences derived from early training, the passage from one of life's well-defined biological phases to another. In view of all these facts the question returns with renewed force : If the difference that religion makes is so uncertain, how can it be maintained that morality is the will of God and the content of religion?

Let us try to discover the answer which religion

would give, by considering each of the two crucial cases in turn—the case of the good man whose morality is apparently<sup>1</sup> unconnected with religious experience, and that of the religious man whose morality leaves much to be desired.

*How the Non-religious Man can yet be genuinely Moral ; how the Attempts to obtain Sanctions for Morality apart from Religion affect his Moral Standing*

The first of the two instances has been to some extent anticipated in the preceding chapter. It is true that it is not necessary to be religious in order to be good ; but it is equally true that it is not possible to justify morality except on a basis of religion. Or, we might say, while it is possible without religion to do what is right, without religion it is not obligatory to do so. So far as the more general theoretical aspects of the case are concerned, this view has been sufficiently dwelt upon. But it remains to show the bearing of these theoretical considerations upon the moral status of the individual.

The questions are : (1) "What does morality mean to the man who insists on treating it from a purely naturalistic and secular point of view?" and (2) "How does the meaning which he reads into it affect his standing as a moral man ?" <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I say 'apparently' ; for it is always a possibility that there may be elements of religion—religious emotions, sentiments, even conceptions—in the attitude of the man who rejects religion itself. If so, this would be an instance of the difference between the adjectival and the substantival aspects of the case, upon which so much stress has been laid.

<sup>2</sup> The analysis which follows is not meant to imply that a purely secular morality must be made to rest upon a basis of naturalistic

(1) As to the meaning of a secular morality, there are two possibilities of interpretation : (a) either the conception of obligation may be got rid of altogether, or else (b) an attempt may be made to find a place for it on such grounds as are available under the hypothesis in question.

(a) In the first case it is necessary to maintain that there is such a thing as morality, but no such thing as obligation. What is the nature of the morality from which the idea of obligation is thus excluded ? As we have seen, the only possible answer is that it reduces entirely to a question of expediency, happiness or pleasure. Morality, from this point of view, is the system of all the values that can be reduced to one or other of these conceptions. But, as has been pointed out, expediency, happiness and pleasure are either states of the conscious subject or relations between such states ; in any case, they are matter of fact and no more. And while it is possible to generalize the facts of experience in such conceptions as have been mentioned, it is not possible to pass from facts to value without a change of standpoint. In other words, while it is perfectly in keeping with a naturalistic ethics to generalize the experience of pleasure in the conception of happiness, and to generalize the conditions that make for happiness in the conception of expediency, it is not possible to interpret the latter conception as implying anything in the nature of a directive jurisdiction over human affairs. The premises do not permit us to *recommend* expediency, or happiness, or goodness.

theory. It need have no theory behind it at all ; but in so far as it has, the theory must be naturalistic. The case dealt with in the text is that of a morality resting consciously on its theoretical basis.

Now it is the tacit assumption of all ethics that certain types of action and courses of conduct are *recommended*. If therefore there is nothing that is recommendable, then the motive that leads us to generalize states of pleasure, and the activities that make for them, is rendered null and void, and the science of ethics becomes meaningless. The consequence of refusing to admit that there is any such thing as obligation is that in the end we are compelled to deny that there is any such thing as morality.

(*b*) The remaining possibility is that of accepting the notion of obligation, but only on grounds that are compatible with naturalistic presuppositions. How is the conception, thus interpreted, to be understood? If it is to have any meaning at all, it must include two factors. In the first place obligation implies the notion of compulsion or necessity; in the second place the notion is applied to certain conjunctions from which the element of necessity is entirely wanting. What is bound to happen because it could not be otherwise, is not obligatory.

The meaning of these apparently contrary qualifications is that there are two kinds of necessity, physical and moral. Obligation requires the presence of the one and the absence of the other. This itself would be fatal to a completely consistent naturalism. But waiving the point, let us see whether it is still possible to find a place for obligation in a naturalistic scheme of things. The pivot upon which everything turns is the precise application of the concept. What are the actions which, from the naturalistic point of view, are obligatory? They are the actions which result in a realizable sum of pleasure, or, more generally, in happiness. With a view to the realization of

these ends we are *obliged* to adopt certain empirically ascertainable means.

Now it will be seen that the concept does not apply to the ends in question. Neither pleasure nor happiness, which is merely pleasure in general, can be thought of as obligatory. These are the hypothetical eventualities in relation to which the means employed acquire the character of necessity. But in so far as the end involved is not obligatory, the idea of obligation, as applied to the means, resolves into the empirical guarantee of an invariable connection between certain hypothetical states of consciousness and certain possibilities of action. In a word, it is nothing but a generalization of facts. Thus, just as in the previous instance it was found impossible to deny obligation and retain the idea of morality, so now it is impossible to retain the notion of obligation upon which morality depends.

It is obvious that these conclusions cannot be accepted by the naturalist himself, so long as he assumes the rôle of moralist as well. As a matter of fact, every naturalistic system of ethics presents the spectacle of the thinker divesting himself of the conception of obligation with one hand, while he covertly restores it with the other. The procedure need occasion no surprise ; for it is implied in the very idea of erecting an ethical system upon a naturalistic basis. To the question, therefore, what morality means to the thinker who treats it from a purely secular point of view, I must reply that the moralist in him assumes it to mean everything that the naturalist denies. In effect, his personal morality may be the same as if his conception were fundamentally different. Only, it has its roots in obscure

subconscious judgments or in uneliminated habits and prejudices of the mind, rather than in the views which he succeeds in formulating by the aid of reason.

(2) The answer to the second question as to how this affects his standing as a moral man follows from the answer to the first. In so far as his theory is a consistent naturalism, and his practice an exact transcript of his theory (and these are both very large assumptions), he will have no morality at all. In so far as he is a genuinely moral man, his life will be the practical refutation of his theory. Of such a man it must be said that it is a great thing for him to do the will of God even if he can find none but bad reasons for so doing. It is a great thing, but it is a tragic predicament; for so long as he fails to see the true significance of the life he is leading, however noble that life, his being is dangerously divided against itself. And furthermore, it is impossible for him to bring the meaning of his conduct home to himself in the form of an actual experience—the experience of what it is to do the right, knowing it to be God's will. He is thus shut out from the supreme possibility of human experience. His is assuredly no case for reproach, but only for regret. He is among the pure of heart to whom it was promised that they should see God; and through an error of the mind he has made the promise not now available.

Yet although there is no human tribunal that dare pronounce judgment upon a purely secular morality, there is a place for judgment even here. Where nothing is wanting but a sense of the Divine, there is still something wanting that is indispensable.

Morality at its highest implies the highest degree of consciousness ; and if moral goodness is a harmony with the divine will, where all consciousness of such a harmony is lacking the harmony can hardly be complete, and the result can hardly be the highest morality. Thus, even from the abstractly ethical point of view—the point of view which necessarily considers morality independently of religion—there are possibilities of attainment that cannot be reached by a purely secular morality.

*Moral Delinquencies in the genuinely Religious*

We come now to the second<sup>1</sup> of the two phenomena that seemed to threaten the theory that morality has its roots in religion—the fact that religion does not always in practice produce the moral reformation that it guarantees in theory. How are we to explain the moral delinquencies of those whom religion has definitely claimed for its own ? Is it that salvation does not include moralization ? This can hardly be, if morality is the content of religion. Is it that the religion of the delinquent is no true religion at all, but only some specious counterfeit ? That it is so in every case would be too much of an assumption. Finally it must be observed that from the standpoint of religion itself the commission of sin does not debar the individual from the privileges of religious standing. Such being the case, we must conclude that religion is sometimes morally ineffectual, and that it is possible for a religion to be genuine even when the morality which is its content is far from perfect.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 139.

*The one Condition upon which Sin is compatible  
with the State of Salvation*

The problem that arises from this situation is specifically as follows. Granted, as was said, that it is possible to be saved and still to be a sinner, how is it possible to be a sinner and still to remain in a state of salvation? Upon what condition can we think of sin, in whatever kind or degree, as anything but the swift and irremediable doom of everything that religion is and means? Upon one condition only. There must be something in religion that not only demands a perfect moral life, but neutralizes the effect of every failure to attain it. If it is asked: "And how in turn is this condition realizable?" the answer can be gathered from the implications of the question. The effects of sin can be neutralized, and the integrity of the religious life maintained, only if it is possible, in the situation determined by the nature of religion itself, that after the commission of sin the situation should become once more what it would have been had no sin been committed.

The problem then hinges upon the situation referred to. Obviously it is not a physical situation. It belongs to a category which we discover in the realm of personal relations. The perfection which religion demands of those who have accepted its benefits, and which they never fully attain, is in the nature of a debt which we cannot pay, but which may be remitted to us. Our moral delinquencies fall into the class of offences which we commit against a person and which a person can forgive. If this is so, if these are the appropriate categories, and if,

further, there exists a person such as we have described, a person capable of imputing and of not imputing unto man his trespasses, then we have the exact condition required in order to explain how it is possible that sin should be committed after conversion, without a forfeiture of salvation.

Once more the idea of personal relationship has proved the key to an ethical problem. Just as the notion of obligation presupposes a divine person, to whom all obligations are due, so the notion of sin presupposes a divine person, against whom all sin is in the nature of a *personal* offence, and who is able to reconcile the ideal demands and professions of religion with the actual achievement of mankind.

One question, however, remains unanswered. Is the remission of sin, even if possible, ethically justifiable? In reconciling men to Himself, and restoring them to full religious status by the act of forgiveness, is not God sacrificing morality to religion? And is He not, therefore, by the same act, outraging the nature of religion itself, of which, as we have seen, the content is morality?

The answer is that if human character and human actions are to be treated with the literalness and finality of physical facts and events, then no justification can be found in morality for the forgiveness of sin. But of course if they are so treated, there will be nothing about them that calls for forgiveness. The truth is that morality, *as religion defines it*, precludes the possibility of viewing human life and its values as final facts of nature. From the standpoint of religion the 'righteous', though literally imperfect, are ideally perfect. It is this distinction between the realistic viewpoint and the ideal which

makes it possible for St. Paul to claim and to disclaim perfection almost in the same breath.<sup>1</sup>

In what sense must the distinction be understood? It would be a somewhat superficial and quite inadequate view that would see in it nothing but the difference between a partial and a completed achievement. No doubt the idea of progress is implied, and St. Paul's words indicate that he had this in mind. But there is more intended than the thought that the redeemed are *on the way* to perfection. The distinction really rests upon the further distinction between the religious and the secular. The idea of moral progress has nothing in it specifically religious. But the progress which, from the standpoint of religion, terminates in an ideal perfection, is a progress determined by the fact that the practical problem of the moral life is soluble only when morality is seen to be a religious function. The differentiating feature is, therefore, the ability to invest all moral achievement and all moral failure with a religious significance. It must be realized that religion contains the key to the ethical problem. So long as this is seen, and so long as all effort is directed in the light of this truth, the solution, though incomplete, is *guaranteed*, and the soul is credited with an achievement still to be brought to a successful issue.

The difference between secular and religious progress is the difference between *merely advancing*, and advancing in the right direction; and the rightness of the direction depends on the fact that religion is believed to contain, and to reveal, the meaning of life. The morality, therefore, which is its content, is

<sup>1</sup> Philippians iii, 12 and 15.

the progressive unfolding of that meaning in the sphere of conduct; and all moral progress that divides itself from religion, whatever its value and however admirable its achievements, involves an aberration and a certain falsification of life's meaning. The perfection of the righteous is the perfection of fallible men and women, who, however aberrant the course of their lives from point to point, are nevertheless in the main perfectly oriented towards the fundamental issue of human existence.

### *The Difference between Religion and Morality*

We have seen that religion has its origin in the idealization of life.<sup>1</sup> It therefore implies two views. There is the life of the body, the life that is here and now and is given to us with the conditions of our physical nature. There is also the life that is not yet, but has to be attained through spiritual experience and spiritual effort. It is the specific function of religion to reveal the latter as the hidden meaning of the former, and in revealing it, to *make* it its actual meaning. The idealization must be at once distinguished from its natural analogue, and related to the latter. The act of negation is at every point correlated with an act of affirmation. Religion is differentiated from everything else by the attitude of otherworldliness; but otherworldliness is not the whole of religion. Rather the sense of that *something beyond* makes itself felt through the medium of this life on earth. The righteous must live in two worlds at once. Yet the two are not, so to speak, *worlds apart*, for the one is the meaning of the other.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. vol. i. pp. 202, 280.

Likewise in the field of morality. The ideally perfect must realize their perfection in forms pre-determined by the conditions of the natural life, and in ways which to an external observation are hardly distinguishable from those of a secular morality.

Nowhere have these ideas been more beautifully expressed than in the Epistle addressed to Diognetus<sup>1</sup> by an anonymous Christian writer of the second century.

“The Christians”, says this writer, “are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. . . . But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the nations in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners. As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. . . . They marry, as do all (others); they beget children. . . . They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven.”<sup>2</sup>

Most significant of all is a passage which follows a little later, and in which the writer seeks to define

<sup>1</sup> Thought by some to be the Diognetus who is known as the tutor of Marcus Aurelius.

<sup>2</sup> Translation by Roberts and Donaldson in the Ante-Nicene Library, *The Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i, ch. v, pp. 307-308.

the relation of the Christian to the world, by a reference to the parallel relation of the soul to the body. "The flesh", we are told, "hates the soul, and wars against it"; but "the soul loves the flesh that hates it, even as the Christian loves the world".<sup>1</sup>

The religious life, then, differs from the good life in general chiefly in the ideal meanings which it sees everywhere. In fact religion might be described as a system of idealizations, revealing itself as an idealized life, an idealized character, a morality that is an idealized interpretation of human conduct. These idealizations rest upon a basis of faith—that sense of things unseen—and faith in turn is nothing more than the belief in a divine person capable of sustaining the idealizations of religion by relating all things to Himself. Thus human actions which, when considered by themselves, are merely events in the world of space and time, become the expression of religious meanings when we consider them as an activity whereby finite personalities either fulfil or frustrate the will of God. It is the first condition of the religious life that we should learn to view all things from this point of view. The initial mandate of religion is: 'Believe in God'.<sup>2</sup>

### *The 'Once-born' and the 'Twice-born' Religions*

Thus effectual belief in the personality of God

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* ch. vi.

<sup>2</sup> The exact form of the expression is worthy of notice. It is not merely the belief that has to do with matters of fact, the belief that has as its object the content of a noun clause: it is the belief *in*, the belief that addresses itself prepositionally to a person. Cf. Matt. xviii, 6; John vi, 29; John xiv, 1. From the religious point of view the belief *in* God is a mediatorial act through which all other forms of belief acquire their significance.

(which means more than a theoretical belief that God *is* a person) is the condition of that radical change which religion professes to bring about in the lives of men. It is this that makes all things new. But a word of explanation is necessary here. Among the religions of the world there are some that have laid greater stress than others upon the fact and the necessity of a second birth—so much so that it has seemed to acute observers that certain forms of religion overlook and even reject the idea of regeneration. Hence it is that William James has thought himself justified in classifying religions as ‘once-born’ and ‘twice-born’.<sup>1</sup>

The validity of the distinction need not be disputed ; but it is a question how far the historical religions which minimize the importance or doubt the reality of the second birth can be taken as true representatives of the completed concept. This much at least is plain—that to the extent to which any religion fails to differentiate itself from the natural life of man, to that extent it is wanting in clearness of definition. And presumably if the process of approximation is carried to the limits of possibility, there must come a point at which religion disappears altogether in the secular. The truth seems to be that the distinction in question is not so much a distinction between religions which insist upon and religions which exclude the second birth, but rather between religions which magnify and religions which minimize the radical character of the readjustments to nature which second birth implies. Thus the once-born religions which James has in mind, the religions of healthy optimism which do not lay too much stress

<sup>1</sup> *Vide The Varieties of Religious Experience*, lectures iv, v and viii.

upon a conviction of sin, but rather emphasize the unreality of evil, can hardly be viewed as dispensing altogether with the idea of a second birth. The optimism which they advocate certainly implies a somewhat drastic dealing with the facts of experience as ordinarily understood—nothing short, indeed, of a revolution in our attitude to life. What these religions do is to encourage the soul to take the step required, by emphasizing the painlessness of the process, and by smoothing the transition from a state of nature to a state of grace. This need not be taken to imply that there is no need for regeneration, or that regeneration is anything less than a fundamental and fundamentally new attitude in the awakened soul.

*An indispensable Fifth Factor in the completed Concept of Religion : the Postulate that a Being exists to which the Finite Subject can relate his Personality as a Whole*

(5)<sup>1</sup> It remains to add one feature to the concept of religion, and then we shall have done as much as we can hope to accomplish within the limits of this highly generalized inquiry and without seriously raising the question of validity. As already noted,<sup>2</sup> the initial mandate of religion is: 'Believe in God'. The regeneration of a total personality, in contradistinction to the piecemeal sublimation of the instincts and the natural evolution of character, depends upon the assumption that there exists a power sufficient to bring about the supposed trans-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> Above, p. 150.

formation. The condition under which alone the change implied is even thinkable is the possibility of discovering a relationship into which man's personality can enter, not as an aggregate of dispersed potentialities, but as an integral unit. This does not imply that before religion can begin to transform a human life from within, that life must be already a highly integrated whole. It may be that the act whereby the saving power addresses itself to the soul is the first stimulus to which the character has ever reacted in its entirety. If so, the process of regeneration must be thought of as creating the condition which alone renders it effectual. It is a practical demonstration of how an unintegrated character may be made to move as one, of how the soul, in the most literal sense, may 'come to itself'.<sup>1</sup> All that is needful is that the transforming power should have access not merely to the isolated instincts or instinct-clusters, but to that central factor which, however we conceive it, maintains itself as a unitary principle in the most loosely integrated personality, and is presupposed by us whenever we attribute the most dispersed mental states to one and the same person.

As a matter of fact, in many cases religion finds the subject spiritually disorganized or unorganized ; and it is the transition to the religious life that for the first time effects the integration that was wanting. In other instances, the subject has already attained a high degree of psychical and moral integration before religion makes its appeal ; and then it is apt to happen that the immediate result of the impact is to throw the personality into a state of complete

<sup>1</sup> Luke xv, 17.

disintegration.<sup>1</sup> In both cases alike, however, it remains the postulate of religion that something exists to which the personality of the human individual can relate itself as a whole. Whether the personality in question is, to begin with, a highly or a loosely integrated one, is of subordinate importance; and the fact that there are personalities which have become highly organized before the integrating power of religion has been felt, only proves that there are forms of organization that are not religious. Religion indeed implies organization; but the question whether any individual owes the organization of his character to specifically religious influences has to do with the nature of the principle around which the instincts have been organized.

*What this Being must be in view of the way in which  
Religion vindicates its Regenerating Power*

If, now, we consider the conditions of the problem in the abstract, it is not difficult to state in a theoretical way what is required of that to which a human personality is capable of relating itself as a whole.

In the first place, it must be capable of engaging the subject to which it stands related, not on one side of his nature, or on a few sides, but on many sides at once, and in a highly complex manner. As to the exact degree of many-sidedness and complexity involved, we can only say, again speaking theoretically, that this will be determined by the conditions of the problem. These conditions may be

<sup>1</sup> Witness the long-drawn-out and convulsive processes that accompany the conversion of powerful personalities such as Augustine and Tolstoy.

stated as follows. Looking at human experience as a thing of the time being, as a momentary actuality, rather than a perpetual possibility, it may be assumed that for every personality at any particular level of development there exists an ideal conjunction of psychical elements, which represents the maximum of integration attainable at that level. In order that this maximum may be reached it is necessary that the individual instincts should be adjusted to one another in such a way as to render the conjunction possible. This will normally imply some modification and sublimation of the isolated impulses. On general theoretical grounds it does not necessarily imply the total suppression of any fundamental instinct ; but in individual cases where sublimation is impossible, such suppression may be found empirically necessary.<sup>1</sup> The first feature then in the conception I am trying to establish will be the assumption of a relation into which the finite subject can enter, of such a sort that the total result upon character will be the maximum of complexity that is for the moment compatible with a maximum of integration.

The second feature follows from a certain modification that must now be introduced into the case as it has just been stated. We must look at experience no longer as a thing of the time being but as a perpetual transition from one thing to another. From this point of view it is at least a theoretical possibility that the ideal conjunction which we have viewed as a static moment in the life-history of the individual,

<sup>1</sup> This is the predicament referred to by the Founder of Christianity in the words : " And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is, profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell " (Matt. v, 29).

and as a maximum possibility for the time being, may be neither a maximum possibility nor an ideal conjunction, when viewed from the standpoint of development. Thus it may be necessary to sacrifice something of temporary adjustment in the interest of larger eventualities, and to submit from time to time to the disrupting power of new truth and the unsettling influence of a growing experience.

*No Religion can live on its Ideals alone ; it is the  
Ideal Factor upon which the Strain falls*

As we have seen, the first powerful impact of religion is only too likely to result in disintegration ; and something of the same sort is likely to occur with every accession of fresh light. There is a dialectic of religion which has its recurring negative moment. The religious consciousness is called upon to stabilize itself not once but many times. The 'hound of heaven' is persistently on the trail. This is necessarily the case ; and the necessity is seen as soon as we reflect that the religious life is a thing which must not only sustain itself upon a comprehensive value-judgment, but must also go out daily and hourly with this judgment to meet the bewildering vicissitudes of human experience. No religion can live upon its ideals alone. These ideals must be constantly revived by admitting a stream of cold facts from the real world. There must be a perpetual confrontation of the ideal with the real and the real with the ideal. And such confrontation is no mere philosophical collation of facts and thoughts. It expresses itself in practical situations in which the conative and emotional aspects of the spiritual life are engaged to the

hilt. If it were not so, the predicament would not be real in the religious sense. The religious life, while on its ideal and theoretical side it implies a profound peace with God and through God with man and the world, brings with it, in its practical aspect, a demand for readjustment so painful and violent that it cannot even occur without a protest against the order of things which renders such readjustment necessary. To protest thus is to remonstrate with Providence ; or it is to appeal to God against Himself. It is a criticism of the divine dispensation ; and without it the religious life can hardly reach its greatest depth.

Obviously such a situation is fraught with tremendous danger ; but this too is in keeping with the character of religion. In the moment of direct strain, there are two things which may happen. Either the soul, from the abyss of its distress, will, as in the case of Job, triumphantly reaffirm its faith in the Divine ; or else, defeated, it will try to revert to the plane of the natural life. It will either re-establish or reject the dominion of the religious motive. In both instances it is the ideal factor in religion upon which the strain falls. In the one case the strength of the ideal carries the conscience successfully over the passages in experience where the ideal itself is most nearly eclipsed, while the world turns its most opaque and realistic aspects full upon the despairing soul. But the victory of religion over the worst that experience can do is not assured until experience has done its worst. The soul that has never been critical of God can hardly know the completeness of reconciliation with the divine order. The strength and fulness of the affirmation in which the conflict closes

is commensurate with the strength and reality of the temptation which has failed to destroy the believer's faith in God and resignation to His will. Such a resignation is an attitude which can never be rendered real by any process of general intellectual assent. Its content is not to be found in abstract maxims covering the mysterious ways of Providence. It is not the soul that is at ease in Zion that knows what it means to assert : " Thy will be done ! " but the soul which only a moment before had pleaded that the cup be taken from it.

Herein we see religion vindicating itself as a real power in men's lives, and the crowning test is the test of actual temptation. The triumph over temptation implies a situation in which, to begin with, the facts of nature and experience are too much for the natural man—in which therefore the natural man goes down to the rock-bottom of nature itself, and there realizes to the full what it is to be a man. In this there is assuredly the bitterness, if not the actuality, of defeat ; and there would be the actuality as well, if the situation ended here. For it is of the very essence of real temptation that the ideal demand placed upon the soul should be beyond the power of the instincts. From the standpoint of nature, the demand is literally impossible ; and the very idea of a triumphant issue implies the assumption that there is in man a power of the ideal which carries him beyond the conditions of the natural life.

The initial phase, then, in which man feels the power of his nature over him, must be followed by another in which he feels the power of the ideal over nature. Religion depends upon our ability to give a meaning to these assertions. In all this the special

point to which I wish to direct attention is the fact that the eventual complete regeneration of personality is not arrived at by a series of precisely defined stages, in which integration succeeds directly upon integration until a limit is reached. The process of regeneration, however definitive in its origin, must be viewed as extending indefinitely into time, and as never completed so long as fresh spiritual attainment prepares the soul for new stresses, and victory has on each occasion to be snatched from the hand of defeat. We must therefore learn to estimate the integration of personality which is implied in the capacity of the soul to enter into religious relationships, not only as the maximum which is compatible for the time being with a maximum of complexity, but as a maximum to be measured against the successive disintegrations to which the soul is subjected in the slow and painful attainment of its ever-expanding religious horizons.

*Whether, and in what Terms, the Nature of the unconditioned Being allows of being defined by us*

It remains to see whether from an examination of the religious relationship, as thus defined, it is possible to gather anything as to the nature of the divine being with which the soul is assumed to stand in this relationship. Formally considered, the problem looks like a simple exercise in ratios. Given a term and a relationship, to find the remaining term. But the situation is not so simple as this. For the relationship in question is not, like the types of relation investigated by modern logic, an external context or nexus in which the terms merely happen to find themselves. It is a relationship which must be sustained

by an active process, and which must be interpreted from the standpoint of certain internal operations that affect the organization of personality. The problem therefore must be stated in some such terms as these. Granted (1) that human personality is a thing which admits of indefinite *regeneration* and *degeneration* through integration and disintegration respectively, (2) that personality itself may be measured by the possibilities of eventual integration, and (3) that such possibilities are dependent upon the discovery by the finite subject of a being to which, as he thinks, he can still relate his personality as a whole, when the limit of possible integration has been reached—what are we entitled to infer as to the nature of this being ?

The one obvious thing is that the being in question defines itself in the same act of thought whereby we define the nature of a finite personality. God, so far as we can see at present, must be the correlate of a completed personality in man. But what does this mean ? Does it mean, for instance, that we not only define God by implication when we state the fundamental facts of man's personal nature, but that we define God *in the same terms* as those in which we define personality in general ? In a word, must God be conceived as a person ?

The answer to the question (which has already been anticipated in our discussion of morality) is to be found in an analysis of the idea of personal relationship. It is obvious that not every relationship in which a person stands is a personal relation. Man relates himself not only to his fellows and (possibly) to a divine person, but to a whole world of impersonal objects and forces. Not only so, but, as we have seen,

his relations to his fellow men are not always of a personal nature, and modern civilization in one of its most characteristic aspects may be regarded as a vast organized effort to discover how in practice man's relations with man may be rendered more and more impersonal.

Now it is the fundamental character of the impersonal relations in which man finds himself placed, whether or not he has deliberately contrived to render them thus impersonal, that they do not permit him to relate himself as a completely unified personality to his object. This is clearly the case as regards physical things, which elicit our responses in the form of stereotyped reactions along lines determined objectively by the different nature of the things in question, and subjectively by the difference between one set of impulses or interests and another. The same is true of man's relationships with man in so far as these are of a purely or primarily technical or professional character.<sup>1</sup> Such relationships are more or less exactly defined by the interests out of which they arise, and the interest in question always falls short of a general regard for the personalities involved. In situations of this sort man's instinctive nature is very unequally engaged. The relation of employer to employed, of physician to patient, of one class in society or one political party to another, implies in each instance the restriction of personal contacts to a function which is defined by the conception of some result to be achieved or some contingency to be prevented. Activities so determined

<sup>1</sup> For a treatment of this subject in its bearings upon religion *vide* Professor Hocking's *Human Nature and its Remaking*, chs. xxxiv and xxxv.

differ from instinctive action only in that they represent the deliberate utilization of certain organized groups of instincts which promise to subserve the ends in view.

It follows that the only kind of relationship in which the individual can connect his nature *as a whole* with any other nature is a personal relationship, and that the only kind of relation which we can describe as genuinely personal is a relation in which one person stands related to another person. Herein appears the difference already referred to between the type of relationship with which we are here concerned and the type dealt with in the theory of relations. In the one case relations are between terms objectively considered, in the other between *subjects*, and it is only in the latter instance that man is compelled to carry his personality as a more or less integrated whole into the relationship.

We are now in a position to answer the question as to the nature of the (as yet) hypothetical being towards whom alone it is possible for man to place his ideally integrated personality in the relation of subject to subject. God, if He exists at all, must be a person—unless indeed there is a suprapersonal state of being capable of sustaining all the implications of personal relationship. As to the connection of the human soul with the divine person, we have seen that this involves disintegration as well as integration, and that it begins in a radical negation of self as a condition of attaining that reality of selfhood which all religion seeks. Even in its negative phases, however, religion implies the unity of the personality which dissolves into its elements upon the first conscious

contact with the Divine. If it is a *self* that is divided, the divisions are still divisions of the self, and it is through them that the personality advances to the higher possibilities of integration.

*The Completed Concept of Religion in its  
Relation to Christianity*

By now it must have become apparent that this account of religion in general is at the same time a generalized account of religion in one of its specific historical forms. In its non-doctrinal aspect Christianity is a view of life resting upon just such familiar ideas as those with which we have been dealing—the personality of God and of man in a world that is not all personal nor all impersonal; the possibility of personal *relations* between man and the divine person, who from this point of view is regarded as a Father; the rebirth of the soul to a new and higher selfhood through an experience of what personal contact with the divine being means. The familiarity of these ideas may be partly due to the circumstance that Christianity has rendered them the common currency of religious thinking to a large part of mankind. Everything, therefore, turns upon the conception of personality; and Christianity may be described as a personalist interpretation of existence. Whatever may have been the vicissitudes of its historical development, it has never failed to give a more or less adequate expression to the generic concept of all religion as a personalist view of life.

Furthermore, Christianity relates itself uniquely to the universal character of religion, when viewed not only from the *generic* but also from the *genetic*

standpoint. In this aspect it owes its uniqueness to its acceptance of certain primitive features and its rejection of others. Even in its profoundest moments it is in a sense akin to animism, of which it is the spiritualized sequel. In certain of their fundamental features the primitive religions are the type of all religion ; and in reproducing these features Christianity is merely proving true to type. In so far, then, as religion is dependent upon the personalist point of view, and in so far as the personalist point of view is a refinement upon animism, it is no extravagance of the analogizing fancy to see in Christianity the true successor of primitive religion.

On the other hand, it is no less true that the inadequacy of animism, its inability to bring out and to sustain the implications of a personalist interpretation of existence, is nowhere more clearly brought to light than in the profound differences which divide the primitive view of nature from the Christian conception of God. Within the limits of the generic character of religion as based on the idea of personal relations, Christianity, above all other historical religions, has shown that the conception of personality demands a negative attitude to nature, and that it is only in the light of the antithesis of nature and spirit that the true character of the spiritual can be seen.

From this point of view Christianity represents the necessary correction of animism and of certain still potent errors in that theory of nature which, having first of all given us the clue to a personalist interpretation of life, has ever since continued to obstruct progress by the inadequacy of the concepts which it employs. In his naïve assumption that the

problems of a personal existence can be solved only by the agency of personal beings, the primitive worshipper was altogether right; but he failed to fathom the real nature of the problems themselves, and he did not know where to look for the personal agency. In the woods and the caverns, in serpents and in the bodies of demented men he sought in vain the deity he obscurely divined, and there emerged a progeny of obscene hybrids, in which the features of nature and the supernatural grotesquely blend. It was to that Judaism which is the precursor of Christianity, and after it to Christianity itself, that fell the task, in an unscientific age, of defining the personality of God by purging religion of every trace of anthropomorphism, whether, as in the case of paganism, the product of the pictorial fancy, or, as in the case of Gnosticism, of the rationalizing imagination. In this, as has been pointed out, Christianity was preparing the way for a strictly impersonal and secular interpretation of nature, just as science at the present day, by making clear the implications of mechanism, is contributing to the understanding of the spiritual, and so, even if inadvertently, is doing the negative work of religion.

*The Completed Concept of Religion in its Relation to Religion's own Requirement of a Secular Attitude to the Things of the World*

The concept which has been built up in the preceding pages abounds in difficulties. With some of these I shall deal in the remaining chapters, which have to do with the question of validity. But there is one point which affects the method whereby we

have arrived at the concept, and which must be disposed of forthwith.

We have assumed that religion may best be examined in the light of its own development ; but the completed concept which has been derived from an application of philosophical thought to anthropological material contains certain features which obviously do not admit of examination along the lines of natural evolution. This is certainly so if we adopt the standpoint of religion itself. We have already been at pains to distinguish between regeneration, which is a phenomenon of religion, and the natural sublimation of the instincts. But it is not necessary to specify such differences in detail. There is a fundamental distinction implied in the fact that religion comes to its own through the antithesis of nature and spirit ; and this in turn implies that there is something in its content which religion refuses to ascribe to natural process, something which it is bound to set over against nature as a whole. Underlying the very idea of such operations as the second birth or of personal communion with the Divine, is a change of attitude towards the whole problem of existence. This change, although it is preceded and conditioned, historically and psychologically, by natural development, both in the individual and in the race, has an inner aspect which is not to be explained by such development. That is to say, as the religious consciousness sees its own experiences, it is unable to view them as nothing more than the natural sequel or product of purely natural conditions. To whatever of genetic naturalness religion is willing to admit into its attempts to understand itself, it is compelled to add the postulate of some-

thing in its own content which is antithetical to nature. Hence it is that when we think of religion as developing, we do so in a peculiar sense. Strictly speaking, it is not religion as such—religion as defined in the concept—that develops : rather it is that man develops in such a way that the concept of religion and the actuality of that which is expressed in the concept become more and more possible for him.

In this progress we discern a curious double movement—a shrinkage in the original ubiquity of the religious motive as the concept of religion attains completeness through the very process whereby it defines itself against the concept of nature. Thus a growing clearness in the apprehension of what religion implies is fraught with the danger of a growing preoccupation with the things that religion defines by negation. The danger is that the secular point of view, which, as we have seen, develops out of the inner necessities of religion itself, will end by entirely displacing the religion to which it owes its origin.

Whether this would or would not be a disastrous conclusion to the whole movement we have been following up is once more a question that involves the problem of validity ; but it would be well if we could pause here to ask what exactly the *concept* implies as to the eventual relation between religion and its own postulate of a secular attitude to the things of the world.

*Religion requires us to take an Introverted View of Nature ; and in doing so it brings us to the Problems that concern not only the Concept of Religion, but the Validity of the Concept*

Theoretically speaking, it is easy to see that if a secular view of nature is implied in the demand of religion for a spiritual view of the divine, the relation between God and nature must be such that to think of nature is not to think of God, whereas to think of God is to think of nature as in some way related to Him. The thought of God, therefore, includes the thought of nature in a way in which the thought of nature does not include the thought of God.

When we think of the physical world, we think of a system (it may be a group of systems with rather ill-defined connections) every member of which sustains external relations (such, for example, as are found to define its variable position in space and time) with other members. To interpret anything whatever from the standpoint of natural knowledge is to see it in the light of these relations. But to think of God is not to think of a being that stands in external relations with other beings, as the units of physical reality do in a spatio-temporal system. The relationship which God bears to the things of the world must involve something more than position in space and time, with whatever additional connections such position implies. It must in fact involve the inner nature of things. Whether things have an inner nature is of course a question which we have not yet considered on its own merits ; but we have seen that the reality of selfhood is a necessary pre-

supposition of religion. The relationships which serve to define the nature of religion are therefore relationships which involve the inner nature of everything that in any way enters into a religious context. Religion, we may say, implies an *introverted* view of nature. The meaning of this statement cannot be made clear without a detailed discussion of the whole question from a new point of view—a point of view which involves not only the concept of religion but the validity of the concept.



PART IV

THE QUESTIONS WHICH BEAR ON  
THE *VALIDITY* OF RELIGION



## CHAPTER XIX

### NATURE AND THE CONCEPT OF EXISTENCE

BEFORE we can understand what is meant by an introverted view of nature we must have some idea of what is meant by nature itself. There is no more fatally ambiguous concept ; but, as we have previously found to be the case, the very ambiguity of the notion, if made explicit, is of such a kind as to throw light upon the question at issue. Fortunately in this instance the ambiguity is one which may be analysed with some degree of exactitude in the light of historical development.

#### *The Factors common to the Physical and the Biological Views of Nature*

If we consider the use of the word ' nature ' as it comes down to us from the earliest era of reflective thinking (the classical period of Greek philosophy), we discern two intimately connected yet profoundly divergent strands of meaning. In the first place ' nature ', φύσις, is the name given to the material substratum of all that exists. It is the underlying reality of that which appears to us in space and time, and is distinguishable from its own appearances precisely in this, that whereas they come and go, it is permanent and unchangeable.

In view of the marked traces of animism which

continued to infect Greek thinking long after the latter had entered upon its scientific phase, it would perhaps be too much to describe the concept of nature in the Pre-Socratics as the concept of the impersonal; but this concept is certainly a characteristic product of the transition, under the influence of meteorological observation, from a cosmogonic to a cosmological explanation of the world; and subsequent ages have rectified the oscillating Greek notion in such a way as to render the concept of the impersonal, implied in it from the first, clear and unambiguous. From this point of view we may say that the concept of nature serves to stereotype the impersonal interpretation of the world against all others. When the first confused inklings of such a view began to disturb the human mind with the surmise of a new insight, the notion of φύσις was born. We see then that there is a sense in which the notion is dominated by what afterwards became the science of physics; and it would hardly be going too far to define 'nature' in this sense as the subject-matter of physical science.

The second conception is one which perpetuates the original animistic point of view, and expresses the change which this view of nature undergoes when animism gives place to biology. Nature is now characterized chiefly by the organization of structure and the centralized discharge of function which are the marks of living things. In this sense we frequently speak of nature to-day, meaning thereby 'animate nature'; and the vitalistic connotation appears in the idea of growth, which is the root meaning of the Greek word. This view has been developed in detail by Aristotle, whose definition of nature is :

“ a certain principle and cause of motion and rest, that in which these states originate by internal process, and not in a fortuitous fashion.”<sup>1</sup>

Let us now place these two concepts side by side, so as to bring out clearly the character of each in contrast with that of the other. Of the two points of view it is clear that that of physics is the more comprehensive. The concept of the physical takes in the phenomena of life, whether or not it is adequate to the latter ; and when we adopt this point of view, the implication is that we are seeking the features of nature in the physical truths that are most nearly universal in their application.

There can be no doubt that the physical standpoint has certain advantages over the biological. If we consider the relations of the two sciences, it is evident that biology looks to physics in a way in which physics does not look to biology. The general tendency is to explain the more highly specialised phenomena in terms of universal conditions, rather than to seek the significance of the universal in the complex structural and functional peculiarities of highly specialised phenomena. Furthermore, if we confine ourselves to the biological point of view and to the view of nature which goes with it, we find the same tendency of interpretation. That is to say, when we think of any phenomenon as ‘ natural ’, or when we refer any object or event to the realm of ‘ nature ’, we do so in the sense that in the instance before us we discern the *universal* character of living things.

The idea which is forcing its way to the front in the concept of nature is one and the same, whether

<sup>1</sup> *Phys.*, B 192, b 21.

its main features are derived from physics or from biology. This idea may be summarily defined as that of permanent existence. Φύσις is that which exists under the conditions of space and time, but is incapable of being changed by these conditions. Thus it is to be found in the qualitative invariability of the four Empedoclean elements and in the unalterable atoms of Democritus. In Aristotle it is typified by the eternally uniform movements of the heavenly bodies. Here the idea is that such eternal uniformity is guaranteed only by that which contains the principle of motion within itself. Exceptions to nature are never eternal.<sup>1</sup> Whether, then, we look at nature from the impersonal standpoint of physics, or from the quasi-animistic standpoint of Aristotelian science, the fact to be explained is the same—namely, the existence of the permanent, or the permanent element in existence.

A study of the problem in its historical aspect will reveal the fact that the conceptions of existence and permanence are integrated with one another. Indeed it would be fair to say that among the conditions which enter into any definition of existence, a place must be given to permanence. This may be shown as follows.

*The Mutual Implication of Existence and  
Permanence in Greek Thought*

If there is anything in the world of which experience is the undisputed guarantee, it is the phenomenon of change. Whether or not experience guarantees the common belief that something does

<sup>1</sup> *De Coelo*, 287 a 17.

not change, there can be no doubt that it warrants the belief that there is something which does. Now whatever be the metaphysical significance attached to the fact of change, whether it be interpreted as the fundamental characteristic of the real or as the very type of metaphysical unreality, one thing is clear. The idea of absolute change is incompatible with the idea of existence. If there is nothing that persists for any time whatever, there is nothing that can be said to exist at all. If there is anything that can be said to exist, it is necessary to assume that there is something to which a certain measure of persistence can be attributed. Thus, where change is viewed as absolute, and persistence is absolutely excluded, we cease to have any right to the concept of being, and ought, as Plato pointed out, to substitute the idea of becoming. On this assumption "nothing ever exists; becoming is always going on".<sup>1</sup> In this way the mutual implication of existence and permanence is suggested by the doctrine of those who do not hesitate to deny the fact of existence.

The exact nature of the implication is, however, better brought out by the opposite theory—that which assumes being as a necessary postulate of thought, and finds the postulate incompatible with the admission of any change whatever. In this connection nothing could be more illuminating than Parmenides' theory of being. I have already dwelt to some extent upon the doctrine of Parmenides<sup>2</sup>; but the needs of illustration will justify a further consideration of the subject, even at the risk of some repetition.

Beginning with the assumption of an existent,

<sup>1</sup> *Theaetetus*, 152 e.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. 1. p. 380 *sq.*

Parmenides finds that the only thing which can be asserted of it is that it exists. To predicate anything further of it would be to *qualify* existence, and therefore to limit or negate it. For this reason we must conclude that the *content* of the existent is *the fact of its existence*—neither more nor less.

It goes without saying that such a doctrine as this is the end of everything, so far as either existence or knowledge is concerned. Nevertheless the idea that Parmenides was struggling to express is one which, if it can only be made clear, will assuredly command universal assent. That idea is, in brief, that the conditions which serve to define the *nature* of the existent must not be such as to render its *existence* impossible. It was due to the excessively abstract and theoretical character of Parmenides' thinking that no such conditions could be found, short of the bare notion contained in the expression : " It is ".

It might be objected that being as thus defined hardly exemplifies our thesis that existence implies permanence. The exclusion of logical contradictions is not obviously the same thing as the exclusion of change. As a matter of fact for Parmenides it probably was so. The words in which he refers to time have been rendered by Professor Burnet as follows :<sup>1</sup>

" How, then, can what *is* be going to be in the future? Or how could it come into being? If it came into being, it is not; nor is it if it is going to be in the future."

By these words Burnet seems to understand a denial of empty time, just as certain other statements

<sup>1</sup> *Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed., p. 199.

are taken to mean a denial of empty space.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps it is assuming too much to suppose that Parmenides could have thought of such a thing as empty time. Assuredly Heraclitus, who must have devoted more attention to time than any Greek thinker of that age, never thought of it except as the continuous sequence of its own contents. It is therefore simpler to understand the antithesis here not so much as that between filled and empty time as that between being and not being. If this interpretation is correct, all that is meant is that time can make no difference to that which is : what *is* must always have been and must always be. It must not be supposed that Parmenides had risen to the mystical conception of a timeless reality, but only that reality, as he defines it, does not depend on temporal distinctions. It would be quite possible to assume this position without denying time. Only, the time in question would be a time in which nothing happened. What would be denied is the reality of change. And if it be asked wherein the notion of a time in which nothing happens differs from that of empty time, the answer is that the former has a content, namely, that which (whether it be the content of space or something else) persists in it unchanged. In view of the difficulty of interpreting Parmenides' attitude to the question of time, I shall not go so far as to say that for him existence is definable in terms of absolute *persistence* ; but there can be no doubt that he conceived the notion of the existent as excluding that of the non-persistent.

The views of Heraclitus and Parmenides are so extreme that it is sufficient for all the purposes of

<sup>1</sup> "The appearances of multiplicity and motion, empty space and time, are illusions." *Op. cit.* p. 208.

philosophy that they were formulated only once. From then on, the problem of human thought—even the problem of Greek philosophy in the immediately succeeding generation—has been that of explaining how, in a world of which change is a fundamental characteristic, it is possible that there should be something which does not change. Or, to express the same truth from the other end, the problem has been to discover how, if existence means *persistence*, the fact of change can be acknowledged. In a word, how can anything *exist* in a world where change is universal ? <sup>1</sup>

*Natural Relations are fraught with a Meaning  
other than that of mere Co-existence and  
Sequence*

The various answers to this question will be found to fall naturally into two groups corresponding closely to the two conceptions of nature with which we have been dealing. Indeed these conceptions have been determined historically by the fundamental difference in the solutions of the problem of change, as this has just been stated. In the first place,

<sup>1</sup> It will be observed that in the foregoing statement the notions of permanence and persistence have been treated as interchangeable—a procedure to which exception may be taken. It is true that the word “permanence” means more than persistence, but the more that it means is only more of the same thing, namely, temporal duration. In the end the difference reaches the vanishing point. For the permanence which enters into the definition of nature is not necessarily thought of as eternity ; it is only *sufficient* permanence to secure that within any system of natural objects or events actual existents will be found. The degree of permanence required will probably be commensurate with the extent of the system. The limiting instance is that of the hypothetical universe, into the definition of which the idea of a maximum duration will necessarily enter.

the attempt has been made to represent change as merely an alteration in the state of something which, in spite of such alteration, continues to maintain its identity. The assumption underlying this view is that a thing is not identical with its states or with any combination or succession of these. One state may become another or may be displaced by another, while that of which they are the states remains one and the same. A significant implication of this theory is that when such displacement or transformation occurs, the event in question is not completely expressed by any statement to the effect that such and such a state has become, or has given place to, another state. To these assertions we must add another expressing the idea that the transition from the first state to the second implies the continuity of the subject to which the states are ascribed. If this theory is correct, the formula of change will not be : " a state  $x$  followed by a state  $y$  ", but " A in a state  $x$  followed by A in a state  $y$  ".

When we ask what this formula means, we are given an explanation which is virtually as follows. The subject A to which the states  $x$  and  $y$  successively pertain is not another state or group of states, e.g.,  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$ ; and the assertion does not mean that a combination of states A  $x$  or  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta x$  is followed by another combination A  $y$  or  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta y$ . The relation of the states  $x$  and  $y$  to A is not one of temporary com-  
presence in a group of states. In a word, states are not states of other states. There is a characteristic of the relationship which implies that while it may be possible for certain purposes of analysis to resolve A into a congeries of its own states, A is always something more than a congeries. Whatever be the rela-

tions into which it enters, it must enter into them not as a plurality, but as a unit ; and once it has entered as a unit into any state, that state forthwith assumes the character not of an added unit, but of a fractional component, or, it may be, a function of the unitary system to which it is assigned. Hence it is necessary to think of  $A$  in the state  $x$  as identical with  $A$  in the state  $y$ , although the state  $y$  is not identical with the state  $x$ .

This is a way of looking at things which might well seem to strain the possibilities of thinking ; and as a matter of fact it does so if we take it in the abstract and theoretical way in which it has been stated. It may be, however, that a certain amount of amplification is all that is needed in order to render the paradox intelligible. This amplification will naturally include a statement of the condition under which it is possible, without contradiction, to assert that a system  $A$  in a state  $x$  is identical with the same system  $A$  in a state  $y$ . Obviously, the condition required is that the state  $y$  should be thought of as, from certain points of view, and under precisely ascertainable conditions,<sup>1</sup> the exact equivalent of the state  $x$  ; and the case will be still further strengthened if it can be shown that  $A$  cannot be thought of as in the state  $x$  without the implication that it will (or at least that it *may*) subsequently be found in the state  $y$ . In other words, the suggestion is that between certain states of any system there are relations which

<sup>1</sup> These qualifying phrases are very necessary. It could hardly be maintained, for example, from the subjective and practical point of view, that a state of sickness is the equivalent of a state of health. From the objective viewpoint of physiology, however, these states are the equivalent of one another in the sense that the one state is what the other becomes under empirically ascertainable conditions.

are fraught with a meaning other than that of mere co-existence and sequence. The question comes to be whether we have any right to suppose such relations.

That *some* relations of the kind exist can hardly be doubted. In the first place, the gross phenomena of experience are full of them. The precisely ordered sequences and alternations of biological and physical process, the periodicity of nature, both animate and inanimate, the well-defined succession of stages in the growth and decay, as well as in the diseases, of living things, are instances in point. And if it be objected that such gross phenomena are of too inexact a character to permit of any deduction from them, the answer is that these phenomena, though gross, are the product of minute structure and of tiny movements, and that an analysis of these tends to reveal even greater evidences of an exactly predetermined relationship. In the last resort, there is something in the general conditions of physical existence, space and time, so rigidly uniform that anything conditioned by them is bound to partake of all the uniform relations that a spatial and temporal character implies. That spatial relations are neither few nor simple is shown by the complexity of geometrical science, of which they are the content. As regards time, the fundamental relations of co-existence and sequence carry with them others equally significant, for example, irreversibility and transitivity. The extent to which a precise and complex meaning may be discovered in the states of the physical world is indicated by the complexity and exactitude of physical law, as embodied in the science of physics.

*In virtue of these Relations Identity is compatible with change of State, and the Activist Views which underlie the whole Structure of Language are so far justified*

There is, therefore, no need for anxiety as to the continued identity of any existent on the ground that its states are perpetually changing. If the relationship between the successive phases of a system is of the kind indicated, the fact of change is not incompatible with that permanence which is the definitory character of everything to which we attribute existence. The system A in a state  $x$  is identical with the system A in a state  $y$ , if  $y$  follows  $x$  with the kind of necessity implied in a physical relationship.

When such is the case, there are instances in which it is natural, or at least permissible (there may be instances in which it is *necessary*), to attribute to A a substantial character in relation to its own states, the latter appearing as modes of behaviour or as transient adjectival qualifications. It is upon these assumptions that the whole structure of language rests—and more particularly the distinction of nouns and adjectives, and the use of personal pronouns and active verbs. When we consider the relationship not (as in physics) between the successive states of the subject, but between the subject itself and its states, we naturally think of this relationship from the standpoint of possession. They are *its* states, and it is said to *have* them. When we consider the transition not as the succession of one state upon another, but as a change from A in the state  $x$  to A in the state  $y$ , we think of the event either as something which A

does, or as something which happens to A. The point of view is necessarily activist, meaning thereby not so much—and certainly not in every case—that A by some inherent capacity of its own, some innate power of initiative, actually brings about the change from one state to another, but rather that the transition must be thought of as falling within the limits of the permanent system A. This system defines itself not only as A in the state  $x$ , A in the state  $y$ , etc., but also as the ordered transition from A in the one state to A in the other. In this sense the transition must be regarded as expressing the nature of the system, and as rendering the system substantial. Thus in conclusion A is defined not merely in terms of its itemized content,  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$ , etc., but also in terms of all the changes which that itemised content may undergo without loss of fundamental identity.

The extent to which this conception has become engrained in our ordinary ways of thinking has been illustrated in a previous chapter.<sup>1</sup> But I should like once more to point out that we constantly describe the phenomenon of change by the use of active rather than passive verbs, even when the idea of initiative and active power is absent from our thought. The metal ball placed upon an inclined plane is said to *run* down, although all the forces involved are directed from without, and all that is given to casual observation is a continuous series of positions in space. We speak of wind as blowing and fire as burning, although fire and wind are now nothing but names for the processes of combustion and aerial disturbance. The limiting case is seen in the extension of the activist form even to impersonal verbs,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. vol. i, p. 335 *sq.*

where the idea of a subject, even as a linguistic fiction, has completely disappeared. Such activist renderings of a purely impersonal event are, of course, exemplified by the familiar phrases, "it rains", "it snows", where the usage, which no doubt is an animistic survival, has at least the merit of indicating natural events or processes. But there are instances from which even this last vestige of plausibility is wanting. Nothing could exceed the paradox of such expressions as "it looks as if", "it appears", "it has long ceased to be the case". Another group of extreme instances is that in which a subject, and even a personal subject, is unambiguously implied, but in which the active verb, so far from denoting the continuity of existence through a succession of changes, actually denotes the end of such continuity. When we speak of a man as dying, meaning not the gradual process which precedes the final event, but that event itself, the question might well be raised: What is the subject to which we attribute the 'act' in question? Or rather, how is it possible for us to combine in the ordinary propositional form the idea of an existing subject with the idea of a verb which connotes the cessation of existence? Obviously only on an animistic interpretation of the phenomenon of death—an interpretation which, as we have seen, excludes the idea of death as non-existence, and represents it rather as a transition from one state of being to another.

There are immensely important logical implications bound up with the view we have been discussing. But we must pass these over in this investigation. Enough has been said to indicate how this particular solution of the problem of existence and

change is connected with the problem of nature. From the present standpoint, nature is obviously conceived in the light of a peculiar conception of change—a conception which entitles us to interpret all changes as the variable states of more or less permanent subjects.

*The 'Subject' of Change, however, has in Physical Science to be conceived not as Substance but as System, and the Self-identity of System from the purely formal Standpoint of Systematic Order*

As has been pointed out, the classical exponent of the theory in its more popular form is Aristotle, whose doctrine of a limited qualitative change in the attributes of an abiding substance is the philosophical formulation of what the unscientific majority have probably always thought on the subject. It will be observed, however, that in this analysis I have not had recourse to the Aristotelian notion of substance, but have spoken in somewhat general terms about a 'subject' of change, which I have represented as a system characterized by states. Such a system may be defined as any plurality possessed of sufficient structural permanence to enable us to attribute existence either to itself or to certain factors connected with it. A human body or the solar system would meet the requirements of the definition. In each instance what we have is a structurally persistent manifold which guarantees existence, in the one case to the body itself, in the other to the members of the system and—though possibly in a somewhat different sense—to the system as well.

It will be seen, then, that there is a considerable

difference between Aristotle's conception of nature and the one which has been here formulated. It was felt necessary to state the conception in more general terms in order to obviate certain dogmatic assumptions in the Aristotelian view. Aristotle's conception of nature as that which contains the principle of motion within itself is weakened by the assumption involved in our definition—the assumption, namely, of selfhood, and of nature as a system of selves. Of course it may well be that such a presupposition is in the end capable of justification. As a matter of fact, in the chapters on mysticism it has been shown that nothing short of a belief in the reality of selfhood can furnish a basis for the religious life. But now we have raised the question of validity, and can no longer avail ourselves of any conception on the ground that it is necessary for the definition of religion. Our present business is to establish the concept of nature in the light of natural knowledge; and there can be no doubt that such knowledge is to be found only in the uniquely exact and comprehensive body of truth that physics has amassed, without the aid of such obscure and problematical concepts as biology adds to those of physics.

Starting then from the theory which, in spite of modifications, we may designate the Aristotelian, let us see where it yields to criticism from the standpoint of physical, as distinct from that of biological, science. The question has to do with the internal nature of the existent which changes, but does not lose its self-identity in the series of its changing states. Is there anything in the world of the actually existent, of which we have a right to say that it is not reducible to a sum or series of states plus the

physical laws which determine the relations of co-existence and sequence among these states?

Reverting to the symbolism already employed, let us ask further: what right have we to stereotype the system  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$  as the permanency A against the succession  $x, y, z$ , which we describe as the states of A? The reason already advanced will be found upon analysis to be legitimate only upon a certain unexamined presupposition. The argument, it will be remembered, was to the effect that the permanency of the system  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$  was guaranteed, if A in the state  $x$  could be shown to be identical with A in the state  $y$ ; and the proof of this in turn was shown to rest upon the fact that in many instances  $y$ , which is the inevitable sequel to  $x$ , may be regarded as its exact equivalent. It was shown finally, that when such is the case, we are bound to regard the transition from  $x$  to  $y$  not as the bare substitution of one state for another, but as a transaction within the limits of a system which, without any loss of identity, appears indifferently as A in the state  $x$  and A in the state  $y$ .

Now the unexamined presupposition just referred to as necessary in order to render the foregoing argument valid, is this. If the transition from A in the state  $x$  to A in the state  $y$  is to be looked upon as falling within the compass of a single system, it must be the case that these states and the law of their succession are completely explained by reference to the internal constitution of the system A. But this, as a matter of fact, is seldom or never the case except in a limited degree. The states and the sequence of states of any system A are usually to be explained not by exclusive reference to the contents and nature of A as such, but by reference to certain relations

between A and other factors—either the formal conditions of existence, space and time, or the conditions which relate A to other existing entities within a more comprehensive system. From this point of view it is evident that we have no right to say of the successive states of any system that they are *its* states in any sense which would preclude our saying that they are the states of the more comprehensive system within which the former exists. In the last resort, all states are states of the universe, and the question arises why we should assign *certain* states in a peculiar way to anything short of the known cosmos.

A complete answer to this question would lead us beyond the limits of the theory we are trying to define. But it may be pointed out that from the standpoint of this theory the conception of a universe is too vague and indeterminate to be of any real use. The fact is that, so far as our human knowledge is concerned, the subordinate systems which, it may be presumed, in their totality constitute the universe, are, even in their incompleteness, far more precisely defined than the whole of which they constitute a part. To them, therefore, we must confine our attention; and when we do so, the truth which emerges is that among the objective contents of experience there is discernible a certain amount of system and order, which compels us to group these contents in one way rather than in another. This, and no more, is what experience, and that scientific knowledge which is only organized experience, entitle us to assert.

Now the fundamental characteristic of such a view of things is that it compels us to look upon the

self-identity of any system from the purely formal standpoint of systematic order. That is to say, the identity of A consists in the fact that A represents a well-defined arrangement of certain contents  $\alpha\beta\gamma\delta$ , etc. What these contents may happen to be is a question of altogether secondary importance. The truth is that in the last analysis the question does not arise whether they have any nature of their own. The main point is that they are amenable to systematic arrangement in ways which the progress of scientific investigation has rendered significant.

*The Methodological Advantages of this Procedure,  
and the Justification for it*

From this there follows an important change in the method of stating the problem of nature and in the solution proposed. If the problem is that of discovering a principle of permanence in a world where change is recognized as a universally characteristic phenomenon, and if the previous solution is that of postulating permanent subjects to which a change of states may be ascribed, the new possibility which now arises is that of dispensing with subjects by a more careful attention to the evidences of order to be discovered among states themselves. The methodological advantages and the logical superiority of this method over the other are at once apparent. In fact it may be shown that this method is really only a rigorous application of a line of thought by which we attempted to gain support for the previous position. On that occasion, however, our conclusion went beyond anything which the premises warranted: now we are about to show the exact nature of the

conclusion to which our earlier argument entitles us.

It was pointed out that the state symbolized by the letter  $y$  could be seen to accompany or to follow the state  $x$  with a necessity which arises out of the formal conditions of existence, or in ways that are guaranteed by the uniformity of experience. This fact was interpreted to mean that  $y$  could be considered as the equivalent of  $x$ , so that one of these states could be substituted for the other without destroying the identity of the system to which they both belong. Such a view, however, is to some extent no better than a speculative possibility. That is to say, granted the necessity of attributing to A a certain permanent self-identity, the view in question enables us to reconcile our hypothesis with the empirical fact of change. As already indicated, permanence and change are both possible in a world where change may be interpreted as a certain sequence in the states of an abiding self. This whole line of thought is the natural product of assuming permanence to be the fundamental fact of nature, and change to be the disturbing phenomenon which must be adjusted to the former. And the justification of the procedure, if indeed there is any justification for it, lies in the fact that from every point of view the concept of nature seems to imply a certain degree of permanence as its definitory characteristic.

*Why the Counter-view which treats Change as more fundamental in nature than Permanence has had to be rejected*

On the other hand there are powerful reasons (arising from the advantages of an empirical stand-

point) for reversing this procedure, and, beginning with the observed fact of change, attempting to discover in what sense and to what extent this fact permits us to maintain the necessity of something that does not change in the world of the existent.

It is clear that even in a universe where change is accepted as the fundamental phenomenon, it is possible to find room for the unchanging in the form of law. In this case nature will have to be conceived as the unvarying law of all change.

This is the view of Heraclitus, in whose mind the absoluteness of change is counterbalanced by the idea of a reason which is common to all things, and in accordance with which all that happens comes to pass. But it is a significant fact that among all the early Greek philosophers of the first rank (with the possible exception of Parmenides) Heraclitus is the one who contributed least to the scientific view of nature.<sup>1</sup> The reasons for this failure are calculated to throw much light upon the value of the view we are considering. But before we can go further, a certain amount of restatement is necessary.

In the first place, we must cease to speak of *states*. This expression implies a distinction between the substantival and the adjectival aspects of reality, which is not in line with the present argument. In place of states, then, we shall speak of phenomena, leaving it an open question whether phenomena are mere appearances, or are the appearances of something other than themselves. On one further point,

<sup>1</sup> On this point *vide* Paul Tannery, *Pour l'histoire de la science hellène*, pp. 168-171; and cf. Grote's remark: "... it appears that his main doctrine was not physical, but metaphysical or ontological" (*Plato*, vol. i, p. 28). "Ontological", by the way, is not a very happy expression for a doctrine which is virtually the denial of *being*.

however, there must be no ambiguity. The appearances in question, whether they are independent or not, must *exist*.

Now it is here that all the difficulties of the theory we are considering begin. I have already emphasized the fact that for this view of nature, as for the other, existence implies a certain permanence. To exist is to *persist*. To the conception of nature as a system of permanent laws, namely, the laws of physics, we must now add at least so much permanence as is required to enable us to attribute existence to the phenomena to which these laws apply. The idea of permanence, it would appear, must be brought in twice, and that with a marked difference of meaning. The invariance of natural laws is hardly thought of in the sense of temporal duration: the permanence which is required in order to impart existence to any phenomenon is thought of in no other sense; and it was his refusal to supplement the permanence of law with a certain additional permanence in the objective content of experience that lay at the bottom of Heraclitus' failure to render his thought scientifically available.

The reason for this discrepancy between the two forms of permanence—the permanence of law and that of phenomena—is a significant one. Phenomena differ from their laws precisely in this, that the *laws* of nature are no part of the content of time, while this is exactly what the *phenomena* of nature are.<sup>1</sup>

With this distinction in mind, we may state the

<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is not to say that they are the content of time *as such*. Strictly speaking, time as such has no content except the purely formal relations which go with its serial character. The content referred to in the text is that which it derives from its complication with space or with anything else which admits of temporal relations.

difficulty referred to as follows. Beginning, as we now do, with the phenomenal fact of change, we find the permanence required by the concept of nature in the invariance of natural law; but such law, since it expresses only a formal *condition* of existence and is not equivalent to the *existent*, can hardly be described as existing.<sup>1</sup> In this case, therefore, the idea of the existent and the idea of the permanent fall apart. The two factors which enter into the concept of nature fail to coincide.

### *The Postulate of Permanence and its Implications*

From such an *impasse* there is only one way out. In ascribing existence to the phenomenal manifold, we must invest at least some phenomena with duration.<sup>2</sup> This requires a peculiar interpretation of the phenomenal fact of change. Change must now be interpreted to mean not the smoothly flowing transition

<sup>1</sup> Or, if so, it must be in a somewhat different sense.

<sup>2</sup> It is disconcerting to find that Mr. C. D. Broad classes the proposition on which such stress has been laid, viz. that "whatever exists in time must persist for a finite time", among those which are "neither obviously true nor obviously false", and that he eventually refuses to accept it, on the ground that it is not in the least self-evident, and that it is "incompatible with the view that the first law of motion is the truly immanent law of an isolated system" (*Perception, Physics and Reality*, pp. 116-117). Mr. Broad's position seems to be the result of thinking too exclusively in terms of the formal conditions of physical existence. My contention does not in any way threaten the continuity either of time or of motion. All that is implied may be stated in the proposition: Granted the continuity of motion (in whatever sense the fact of continuity may be understood), in order that motion should actually occur there must be something that persists. That is to say, if motion is a form of change, and if this form of change actually occurs, then there must be other forms of change, some of which for the time being do not occur. At the very least there must be some sense in which it is possible to say that it is the same body which finds itself successively at different points in space.

which, as a fact of experience, it frequently appears to be, but as a succession of phenomena, each one of which, while it endures, is unchanging.

Such an account is not a transcript but a reconstruction of experience. It is a reconstruction designed to bring the fluctuating and uncertain content of actual experience into harmony with what is seen to be a fundamental condition of existence ; and it implies not only an ontology, but an epistemology. The epistemological basis of the physical interpretation of nature will be considered in a subsequent chapter : meanwhile it is necessary to point out one rather surprising consequence of this whole line of thought. The existence which is secured by what we might call the postulate of permanence must itself be *postulated* in a fashion that savours of the arbitrary. That is to say, in formulating the general character of the existent as implying a definite magnitude in space and a fixed duration in time, the exponents of this view perceive clearly enough that between the character of the existent as thus theoretically set forth, and the guarantee of existence which only experience can afford, there is an unbridged gap. What we experience, *as we experience it*, does not always and obviously conform to the theoretical conditions of existence. It is therefore sometimes necessary to add to the formula a proviso that such contents as conform to the theoretical conditions do actually exist.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An example of this will be found in Mr. Bertrand Russell's statement of the conditions which constitute a point. After enumerating three hypotheses which have to do with the relation of enclosure, he concludes with the words : " to prevent trivial exceptions, we must add that there are to be instances of enclosure, *i.e.* there are really to be objects of which one encloses the other " (*Our Knowledge of the*

Such a procedure, of course, is perfectly legitimate if we consider it from the standpoint of what is implied in the investigation of the physical world. But in accepting it, we must accept its implications also. In particular we are forced to admit that in the interpretation of nature certain theoretical necessities have arisen for which an exact empirical equivalent is not forthcoming. The result, metaphysically speaking, is unsatisfactory. We are left with two views in a state of incomplete reconciliation. On the one hand, it is seen that nature must be the system of all existents, and that the existent is what we encounter in experience. On the other, what we encounter in experience is too chaotic and uncertain

*External World*), p. 115. Cf. a similar proviso in the definition of an instant on p. 121, where it is laid down "that there is at least one event". In his *Perception, Physics and Reality*, in the chapter on causality, Mr. Broad has to insert a proposition "that there are causal laws" (p. 79). A similar postulate is necessary in dealing with the phenomena of electro-magnetism. *Vide* Prof. Whitehead's remarks on the ether, *Principles of Natural Knowledge*, p. 20, and on the "ether of events" (p. 25), where the postulate takes the form of an assumption "that something is going on everywhere and always". Mr. Broad has some interesting observations on the subject of existence. His view involves a distinction between two concepts. There is the existence that is guaranteed by perception, and the existence which depends on certain functional relations of the perceptually existent. The following passage is worth quoting. "The second question that may be asked is: 'Do points, straight lines, etc., really exist in the same sense as volumes, or are they merely convenient and perhaps indispensable fictions?' . . . The right answer to the question appears to me to be the following: Points, etc., as defined by us, are not fictions; they are not made by our minds, but discovered by them. . . . On the other hand, they do not exist in precisely the same sense in which finite volumes exist. They are real in their own kind, but it is a different kind from that of volumes. . . . They are classes of series of volumes, or, to be more accurate, are the logical sums of such classes. The volumes and the series of volumes that define points exist quite literally, and the earlier and bigger terms of these series can be perceived. The points themselves are rather complicated logical functions of these. They exist in the sense that they are determinate functions of real series of actually existing particulars" (*Scientific Thought*, p. 51).

to sustain the demands of thought as to the theoretical character of the existent. However we formulate the concept of nature, therefore, it is necessary to add something in the way of an ideal supplement. If we define it as the object of physics, we must add that the object of physics exists; and if we define it as an object of experience, we must qualify that object in ways determined by the science of physics. The attempt to generalize the two views brings us to the theory of relations.

*Nature, in so far as it is the Subject-matter of Physics, is the System of all Movements in their variable Relations*

This theory may be looked upon as the abstract formulation of all that natural knowledge means and implies; and it is through the medium of this abstractum that the knowledge of nature is best approached from the philosophical point of view. We have ventured to define nature as the object of natural knowledge. Again, since the phenomenalist standpoint of science in general excludes the idea of activity, the subject-matter of physics, as we have seen, is the phenomenon of motion. Nature, therefore, is the system of all movements in space and time, along with whatever well-defined and uniform factors the phenomenon of motion implies. These factors may be summarized as the content of space and time, along with space and time themselves, considered in their variable relations.

The significant fact for us is that from the standpoint of natural knowledge, space, time and their contents can no longer be considered apart from one

another. This discovery is closely connected with the deepening apprehension of two things: (a) the scientific way of regarding motion itself, and (b) the relation of the time-factor to the space-factor.

Let us take these points in order.

*The Scientific Way of regarding the Fundamental Phenomenon of Nature, viz. Motion*

First, then, as regards the scientific view of motion. If we go back to Descartes, we find that the physical world was conceived as consisting of a spatio-material block of existence (space and matter being one and the same for Descartes), and two opposite states, motion and rest. This view of things was modified in one fundamental respect by Leibniz, who, in conformity with his general point of view, conceived the scientifically fruitful idea of representing rest and motion not as two opposite states, but as degrees of the same state, with rest as a limiting case of motion.

Motion therefore becomes the fundamental phenomenon, from the standpoint of which the whole problem of nature must be considered. So far, however, this conception was only or chiefly a methodological device. For the solution of physical problems there were certain advantages to be gained from interpreting rest in terms of motion. As a matter of fact, Leibniz went further than this and maintained that the world is by its very nature fundamentally active and incapable of rest; but this view, while metaphysically interesting, involves a departure from the strictly phenomenalist standpoint of natural science. It remained for a later age to show that

Leibniz's view of motion as the fundamental phenomenon of nature was not merely a useful methodological device, but might be considered as literally true of the physical world, so far as revealed to human observation. This discovery resulted from a study of the relations of space and time to one another.

Reverting for a moment to the older doctrine, we find that the physical universe was thought of as consisting of matter, and that matter was conceived as in a very peculiar sense the content of *space*. That is to say, it was conceived as the content of space rather than of time. Time was not taken with the same degree of seriousness. Unlike space, it appeared to have no content of its own, so that such content as was assigned to it had to be borrowed from space. The spatio-temporal world, therefore, was a world in which the sequence of events appeared as the transition from one configuration of matter in space to another. In this the emphasis was laid not on the transition as such, but on the successive configurations in which the transition began and ended. The existent was identified with matter, which is nothing but the phenomenal content of space, conceived as amenable to variable spatio-temporal relations. Change was the kaleidoscopic succession of different distributions of matter throughout universal space.<sup>1</sup>

That the view in question is inadequate is becoming increasingly apparent. The difficulties inherent

<sup>1</sup> This, along with an uncritical and no longer tenable theory of causation, was the view of physical reality which underlay the doctrine known as Materialism. Materialism is not a physical theory, and is not to be confused with the knowledge of nature. It is a philosophical generalization of such knowledge; and in so far as the theory with which we are dealing has proved inadequate to the interpretation of nature, the old Materialism must give way along with it.

in it have been clearly set forth by Professor A. N. Whitehead as follows :

“ The ultimate fact embracing all nature is (in this traditional point of view) a distribution of material throughout all space at a durationless instant of time, and another such ultimate fact will be another distribution of the same material throughout the same space at another durationless instant of time. The difficulties of this extreme statement are evident. . . . Some modification is evidently necessary. No room has been left for velocity, acceleration, momentum, and kinetic energy, which certainly are essential physical quantities.

“ We must therefore in the ultimate fact, beyond which science ceases to analyse, include the notion of a state of change. But a state of change at a durationless instant is a very difficult conception. It is impossible to define velocity without some reference to the past and the future. Thus change is essentially the importation of the past and of the future into the immediate fact embodied in the durationless present instant.” <sup>1</sup>

*The newer Views of the Relation of Time  
to Space*

In other words, it is impossible to define the unit of physical reality in terms of space alone or of the content of space. We must include the time-factor as well, with all that time implies.<sup>2</sup> The unit of

<sup>1</sup> *An Enquiry concerning Principles of Natural Knowledge*, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Whether, as Dr. Whitehead's statement seems to suggest, the distinction of past, present and future (as contrasted with the more

nature is, therefore, as Dr. Whitehead concludes, *the event*.

It is an interesting fact that while these conclusions were being worked out by Professor Whitehead and others from the standpoint of physics, an identical doctrine was being elaborated on general philosophical grounds by Professor Samuel Alexander. In his important work entitled *Space, Time, and Deity* Alexander has shown, on purely speculative grounds, how space cannot exist without time or time without space, and has attempted to establish a correlation between the three dimensions of space and the three empirically ascertainable characteristics of time succession, irreversibility and transitivity. As a result of this he has come to the conclusion that the physical basis of all existence, the real stuff of which all things consist, is a complex to which he gives the hyphenated title of space-time.

The injection of time into the substance of physical reality enables Alexander to formulate the proposition with reference to motion, which, as was said, lifts the Leibnizian conception above the level of methodological convenience, and invests it with the character of objective fact.

“Space as a whole”, he writes, “is neither immovable nor in motion. But neither can a place be at rest if Space is only one element of Space-Time. Rest, in fact, appears to be purely relative and to have no real existence. Every place has its time-coefficient and is the seat of motion. . . . Thus if absolute rest means the nega-

generalized distinction of before and after) is scientifically necessary (or indeed possible) is a question that would call for serious consideration.

tion of motion, there is no such thing in reality. Rest is one kind of motion, or, better, it is a motion with some of its motional features omitted." <sup>1</sup>

*Further Features characteristic of the New  
Physical View of Nature*

• Such, then, is the idea of physical reality as it appears in the present state of natural knowledge. As contrasted with the earlier conception, this view is determined by the discovery that every content of space is also a content of time. It remains only to point out a few additional features of the new theory. In the first place this view rests upon the total exclusion of the conscious subject from the realm of physical existence. As Professor Whitehead puts it :

" . . . Nature can be thought of as a closed system whose mutual relations do not require the expression of the fact that they are thought about." <sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the physically existent must be defined as anything which occurs, or occupies a place in space-time, with whatever this implies as to the necessity of motion, or, generally speaking, of change. And thirdly, all such entities exist in perpetually changing and indefinitely varied systems of relations. They are the terms of relations, and in so far as they exist, the relations exist along with

<sup>1</sup> *Space, Time, and Deity*, vol. i, p. 84.

<sup>2</sup> *The Concept of Nature*, p. 3.

them, but do not in any way enter into their existence as components. From the standpoint of physical existence, terms are independent of the relations in which they stand ; and from the standpoint of knowledge, as was pointed out long ago by Locke, relations have a nature which can be studied independently of the terms between which they hold.

*Implications and Consequences of this View  
of Nature*

In the light of these generalizations we can now specify more precisely the implications and consequences of this new view of nature. Since the relations in which terms stand to one another in no way enter into the constitution of the terms themselves, and since the only thing which physical science really claims to know is the relations, it follows that all terms, considered without reference to the system of relations in which they occur, are simple and atomic. This does not mean that in themselves they have no qualitative content and no internal structure, but only that such internal character as they may possess is not taken into account when they appear as the units of physical existence. However complex they may be, terms are considered as the units in relational systems.

If, as happens, such terms become the subject of analysis, and so yield a knowledge of their internal complexity, the result is not the overthrow, but the reinstatement, at a different level of discrimination, of this self-same view. Only, what had previously been taken as a simple unit now becomes a system of other units in new relations.

Nature would thus appear to be a system of theoretically simple terms, defined not by anything in the character of the terms themselves, but by the relations which hold between them. It should be added that the units, whatever they may be, are always liable, in the process of actual exploration, to break up into systems in the way described ; so that it is necessary to leave room, in our definition, for the concept of nature as a system of possible systems, regressing infinitely into the minute.

This must not of course be taken to mean that the scientific interpretation of physical reality is nothing but a methodological artifice, and that nature therefore exists only relatively to minds. It is quite true that the sciences exist in minds ; and if we define nature as the object of the sciences, it might seem that it too would have, in some sense, to exist in minds. But this does not imply that nature exists only in or for consciousness, or is in any way subjectively conditioned. It is possible and necessary to state the naturalistic position without any such implication—especially if we interpret it in the light of its own theory of relations. That is to say, if it is assumed that nature exists for minds, we must take this to mean that it is related to them in the way that we call knowledge ; and if so, if it exists as a term in this particular relationship, then, according to the theory of relations, it must also exist independently.<sup>1</sup> None the less it must be admitted that such independent existence is not to be attributed to the object of our knowledge, unless that knowledge is

<sup>1</sup> The question whether, from the strictly epistemological point of view, knowledge can be treated as a relation between terms is a question which we shall discuss in a subsequent chapter.

really adequate, within the limits of what it professes to know, to the independently existent. In the end what exists independently must be thought of as the ideal object with which our knowledge deals only in certain of its more superficial aspects.

This is borne home upon us if we consider the successive stages through which natural knowledge has passed. What we know at any time is presumably the imperfect analogue of that which really is. If in the light of later insight we now know that the unit of physical reality is the event, then obviously the older unit, conceived in terms of the content of space, can hardly be thought of as existing except under conditions not at that time fully perceived. And if so, may there not be conditions, still to be discovered, which are necessary in order to entitle us to attribute existence to the event? So far as nature, considered as the system of all that exists in a physical sense, is definable in terms of the conditions which render it knowable, it must in the present state of human knowledge be regarded as still to some extent an artifact of thought, limited by the distribution of attention and emphasis. The concept of matter was a product of the fact that at one time men attended more to the successive configurations of the content of space than they did to the processes whereby one configuration becomes another. The concept of the event as the unit of physical reality is due to the fact that men have now learned to attend to the time-factor as well as to the space-factor. Existence in the fullest sense of the term seems to float on ahead of every attempt to seize and confine it in any concept by such methods as natural knowledge has at its disposal. The

situation is one that can be understood only if we look at the question from the standpoint of the epistemological assumptions underlying the theory of nature; and this implies, in the first place, a thorough scrutiny of experience.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE NATURE OF EXPERIENCE AND THE ERRORS OF EMPIRICISM

THE theory of knowledge which underlies the naturalistic interpretation of reality is empiricism. In the last resort, however remote the methods of physical science may appear from anything like a literal transcript of experience, it is to experience alone that the physicist looks both for the original suggestions of his method and for the verification of his results. From the standpoint of natural knowledge, therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we should have a more or less well-defined idea of what experience actually is, and of anything which it is commonly assumed to imply.

#### *The Nature of 'Experience'*

There is perhaps no conception in the history of human thought that is more constantly invoked in support of philosophical and scientific dicta than the conception of experience. Yet there is no concept that is more problematical and uncertain, or that calls more emphatically for a precise definition. These facts are in themselves significant ; and it is to be presumed that if we could only understand why it is that a notion so obscure is so frequently appealed to in the solution of problems which in themselves are fre-

quently very definite, we should know at least one important truth bearing on the subject. That men do resort to experience as in some sense a key to their perplexities is a fact that must be admitted ; and, admitting this fact, we are bound to suppose that when they speak of experience, they mean something, and that they have some notion of what it is they mean. It may be that in this they are mostly mistaken ; but the best way to find out is to consider the kind of things that are commonly said about experience, and the ways in which these things are said. Then, should the typical statements and linguistic expressions which denote the nature of experience prove incoherent or self-contradictory, it will be our business to see whether it is not possible to discover the necessary correctives. With this end in view nothing could better serve our purpose than a preliminary examination of linguistic usages. Ordinary speech is a repository of ordinary modes of thought, and it would be strange if we could not learn something of the meaning of experience from an analysis of the word itself and of the various ways in which it is employed.

The word 'experience' belongs to the class of those which are employed in the English language both as verbs and as nouns. Confining our attention for the moment to the first of these usages, we observe that the verb 'to experience' is both active and transitive. It expresses something which we are supposed to do, and the doing of which implies an object. Let us consider this latter point. When we are said to 'experience' something, what is it that we are said to experience ? Is it a state of the self—that self which is the subject of the verb—or is it the object or class of objects presented in experience to

the self—the objects of which our experience is the consciousness? If we reply that the object of experience is identical with the object of consciousness, the further question arises whether the object as we experience it in consciousness is identical with the object as it exists independently of our experience.

In the mind of the plain man there is undoubtedly some sort of answer to these questions—an answer which is probably somewhat complicated, and which may turn out, upon analysis, to be either very confused or surprisingly subtle. In the first place it is the general belief that when we have experience of an object we are actually in the presence of something which is both real and in some sense independent of the fact that we are experiencing it. But this is not all; for there are objects of experience which we think of as existing independently, but which we do not suppose capable of being known in their entirety upon a single experience. We must experience them many times in order to know them. This necessity seems to imply that in some instances at least a single experience is not able to reveal the nature of the independently existing and the objectively real. Presumably, also, the degree of adequacy is a thing which varies. There are experiences which we consider more revealing than others: there are some which are characterized by a certain opaqueness and others which are marked by a certain transparency. It is also a significant fact that the supposed inadequacy of a single experience is assumed to be in some degree remedied by repetition.

Generalizing these observations, we may say that, while the object of a single experience is frequently

thought of as something independent and real, a single experience, or even a succession of experiences, is not always conceived as a true or complete revelation of that which exists. The distinction between reality and appearance here comes into view, and with that distinction arises the necessity of a very careful analysis.

If experience is not always adequate to the nature of the real, can we say that the real object of experience is in these instances only appearance? The answer to this question (at least as regards a wide range of typical cases) would seem to involve the further distinction between a momentary and a prolonged experience, or between a single experience and a repetition of the same. To take a simple illustration, when we look at a distant church tower, the thing actually present to consciousness is a small visible object, faintly and perhaps uniformly coloured, and lacking some of the discernible features which under other conditions we should certainly expect in church towers. Obviously we do not absolutely and literally identify the object thus presented with the object as we suppose it to exist independently of our observation. What then? Are we to say that the thing which we actually experience is nothing but an appearance; an appearance, however, from which, by an act of inference, we construct the thought of a real object?

Before we can answer the question we must amplify our account of the experience itself. The significant point is that experiences of this kind do not occur by themselves, but in groups or series. Thus the objective presentation is only one member in a succession of similar presentations; and unless

we take this fact into account, we are omitting a fundamental feature from the concept of experience itself. Such being the situation, we see at once that the individual presentation cannot be identified with the real object, unless we are prepared to admit a similar claim on the part of every other individual presentation. In this case, since the various presentations in the series are not identical, we should have not one church tower but many. But we do not think of the real object as many. Rather we think of ourselves as having many experiences of it—or at least we think of our experience as in some sense manifold.

*Oneness of the Object in successive and differing  
Experiences*

The question therefore assumes the form : What do we mean by having many experiences of the same object ? Of course we may and sometimes do mean that the object as we experience it at one time is restored to us in exactly or approximately the same form at another time. But as our experiences of the same object commonly differ in other respects than that of time, we usually mean more than this. The difference in question is a difference in the objective content of the experience as such. In what sense, then, can experiences, of which the objective contents differ, be experiences of one and the same object ? Or, better still, what is the one object of successive experiences in cases where the presentational contents are not the same ?

To this question there would seem to be two answers. (1) There is the answer of phenomenalism.

The oneness in question is to be found not in the presented objects as such, but in the system or series of phenomena which they present. Beyond this we have no right to expect any oneness whatever. (2) The answer of common sense is fundamentally different. While the presentations constitute a manifold, what is presented in them is not many things but one thing. Of that one thing the individual presentation is an appearance; and the relationship between the appearances and the real object is expressed by saying that they are *its* appearances: they are the appearances which it presents under varying conditions.

### *The Common-sense View*

The relation between the thing itself and its appearances calls for careful statement. The appearances may be said to *represent* the thing; but they do not do so in the sense implied in the doctrine of representative perception as ordinarily understood. That is, they are not ideas of the mind interposed between consciousness and the real object, and able to stand for, or to represent, the latter, because they resemble it.<sup>1</sup> From the standpoint of the plain man the significant thing about appearances is not that character in them which relates them to the conscious subject as the content of his mental states, but the character in them which relates them to the real object, of which they are the appearances. As *its* appearances they suggest that their nature is more adequately revealed in the fact that they are

<sup>1</sup> For Locke, as we have seen, representation does not imply resemblance.

presented *by the object* than in the fact that they are presented *to the subject*.

It would be a mistake to assume that the appearance of an object is commonly thought of as a mental image of the latter—a reflection or reduplication in consciousness of what the object is in itself. In the moment of actual perception the plain man does not think of himself as looking at an image in a mental mirror. He thinks of the object as actually present in all its reality, and of himself as looking directly at it. It is only when the object is not present, when, therefore, he is not actually perceiving it, that he sometimes finds himself viewing it in what he conceives to be a kind of mental mirror. The difference between imagination and perception is precisely this that in the one case he takes himself to be aware of an image, in the other he takes himself to be aware of the thing itself.

In view of the disturbing distinction between the appearance, which is the actual content of the mental state, and the object of which the appearance is an inadequate representation, it is a difficult thing to render the common-sense view logically coherent. In order to do so we must devise some form of expression which will reduce the number of factors involved. That is to say, instead of thinking of three things, the object, its appearance and the consciousness of the observer, we shall have to think of two things, the observer and his object. What is to become of the appearance will depend on the precise nature of the solution of the problem of relating the two paramount factors.

There are different points of view from which the relationship may be expressed. Looking at the total

situation from the standpoint of the observer, we may say that the latter *perceives* the object. From the opposite point of view we may say that the object *appears* to the conscious subject. Furthermore we still have to assume that it is one and the same fact that is referred to when we say, "the object appears", and when we say, "the observer perceives it". In other words, both assertions imply an identical set of factors, a real, independently existing object and an observer in the act of perceiving it, as well as an identical relation between the two.

This way of stating the case eliminates the appearance—the third, quasi-independent factor which was interpolated between the observer and his object. The appearance is got rid of since it is not thought of either as the object of the active verb or as the subject of the passive. The identity of the two propositions comes out in this, that the second statement is only the first statement repeated in the passive voice. The difference is that between *videt* and *videtur*.

One difficulty, however, remains. Even granting that it is not the appearance which we think of as the object of experience, none the less the appearances occur: they are actually *experienced*; and to say that we pass them over and relate ourselves as conscious subjects directly to the real object which they represent is to emphasize the epistemological implications rather than the psychological facts of the case. Epistemologically speaking, we disqualify the appearances on the ground that they differ from one another, whereas the real object, so far at least as our perceptions have to do with it, does not differ. We are able to assume and to maintain this attitude

by the simple device of associating the difference between the various presentations *adverbially* with the successive acts of perception, instead of investing the appearances with the quasi-independence of representative impressions. That is to say, the appearances are regarded as different *ways* in which the unvarying object is perceived. Only, in stating the matter so, we must remember that for the plain man, even if the differences between successive appearances are differences in the way in which the object is perceived, the appearances themselves, as has been pointed out, are ascribed to the object rather than to the perceiving subject. They are phenomena produced by the object when it is perceived under varying conditions. It is therefore the nature of the real object which, on the whole, determines in what way it shall appear, or what its appearances shall be, when the observer directs his attention to it.

It will be seen that the common-sense view implies an activist interpretation of the percipient event; and the conception of activity is one which we are not yet in a position to justify. Moreover the mode of activity is in this case a very peculiar one. It is an activity directed towards an *object* (the verb is not only active but transitive); and yet the object is thought of as remaining unchanged. A further peculiarity is that the activity itself does not seem to imply the volition or self-determination of the subject. It would seem, therefore, to belong to the class of reactions rather than of actions. In so far as we attend to the perception itself rather than to the various active preliminaries and accompaniments, the subject is not thought of as *doing* anything, but rather as being in a state which is induced by the

presence of the object.<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps for this reason that it is possible in some languages to express the part played by the object either by a passive verb (*videtur*) or by an active form (*apparet*, appears, δοκεῖ). One is tempted to say that beneath all these vagaries of linguistic expression there is nothing but a simple *relation* between two terms, the percipient and the object perceived. This view (which will be dealt with later on its own merits), is, however, incompatible with some of the implications of common-sense thinking, and must for that reason be rejected from the present analysis. Or perhaps we should say, the case before us is that of a perfectly unique relationship, in which the idea of relatedness requires to be supplemented in ways not provided for, and even excluded, by the theory of relations. In a word, the relation between a subject and an object contains features which are absent from a relation between objects.

The difficulties of the conception, as has already been pointed out, will never be cleared up so long as we confine our attention to single presentations or acts of perception. The reason for this is that the true nature of an experience is not fully expressed in single presentations. Every experience of an object comprises a succession of perceptive acts; and it is to this aspect of the subject that we must now direct our thoughts.

That we perceive the same object *differently* is a commonplace of experience. The question is: To what must we ascribe the difference? What is it that differs? Common sense is assured that it is not the

<sup>1</sup> So much so, that it is possible for Plato in the *Theaetetus* to represent the subject as the passive and the object as the active factor.

object. The act of perception is assumed to make no difference to the latter. To perceive an object differently is not to change it; and we distinguish sharply between our changing *perceptions* of an object and the perception of a changing *object*.

The ability to think that the object does not change, while our impressions of it do, is one of the characteristic features in the common-sense view. To experience an object is to have not one, but many, and possibly varying impressions of it, and at the same time to be able to refer all of these to one and the same source. The explanation of this procedure is of fundamental importance for the interpretation of experience in the aspect in which we are now considering it. The explanation, as already suggested, is simply that we have learned by actual practice that it is possible under more or less exactly ascertainable conditions to substitute one impression for another or for a whole series of impressions.

### *The Vindication of Common Sense against Phenomenalism*

The discovery of this fact, which is a practical device of knowledge, forced upon us by the conditions of human experience, furnishes a remarkable vindication of common sense against most forms of philosophical phenomenalism and some forms of realism.<sup>1</sup> It enables the plain man to maintain his natural prejudice in favour of the objective reality of things, without identifying the latter either with the individual impressions of sense or with an un-

<sup>1</sup> The realism of Sir Percy Nunn, for example, which would accord the status of independent metaphysical reality to the *sensa*,

known thing-in-itself. The real object is not the appearance which the object presents, nor is it unknown. It is known by the same process whereby we *know* how to interpret individual appearances as the phenomenal equivalent of one another, and a series of such as the phenomenal equivalent of the independent Real.

This latter statement calls for some elaboration. To know an appearance is to be aware of it. To know a series of appearances is not merely to be successively aware of each: it is to be conscious that the successive appearances of which we are thus aware constitute a system which may be considered by itself as a well-defined complex whole.

Now, generally speaking, a series of appearances is not what we mean by a real thing; and the difference between a real thing and an appearance is not ordinarily thought of as the difference between an isolated presentation and a series of presentations. It is more than this; and in the present instance we are compelled to think of something more—to wit, the fact that the series in question is specifically a series of presentations, each of which is, under definitely ascertainable conditions, transformable into all the others. Hence we must not only think of the individual appearances as constituting a series: we must also think that beneath the difference that separates one appearance from another there is an identity of meaning or of reference.

This identity is unaffected by the difference between appearances as such. The latter are functions of the varying conditions under which they are presented, and they differ as these conditions vary. It follows that a difference between appearances is

only a difference *in appearance*, while behind the difference is the abiding character of that which the appearances all alike signify, and to which they must be referred.

The various factors and relations in the case may be set forth symbolically as follows. (1) Let  $a$  represent one appearance and  $a^1$  another in a series of transformations. (2) Let  $x$  stand for the conjunction of conditions under which  $a$  appears, and  $y$  for the conjunction under which  $a^1$  appears. Then since appearances are functions of the conditions under which, as appearances, they occur,  $a=f(x)$  and  $a^1=f(y)$ . Now we are assuming that  $a$  and  $a^1$  are transformations of one another. That is to say,  $a^1$  is what  $a$  becomes, or at least it is what appears in the place of  $a$ , when  $x$  gives place to  $y$ . Since  $a$  and  $a^1$ , although the equivalents of one another, are different appearances, we cannot say that  $a=a^1$ ; but we can say that  $ax=a^1y$ . The meaning of this equation is that if we take the expression  $ax$  and substitute  $y$  for  $x$ , we shall find that as a matter of experience  $a^1$  has taken the place of  $a$ . Conversely, if we begin with  $a^1y$  and substitute  $x$  for  $y$ , we shall find that  $a$  has taken the place of  $a^1$ . Hence, since experience itself does not permit us to identify the two different appearances,  $a$  and  $a^1$ , or the two sets of conditions,  $x$  and  $y$ , and since the same experience compels us to identify  $ax$  and  $a^1y$ , we must conclude: (1) that it is one and the same thing which appears as  $a$  in the expression  $ax$  and as  $a^1$  in the expression  $a^1y$ ; and (2) that this invariant factor is neither the appearance  $a$  nor the appearance  $a^1$  nor any other appearance. It is that of which  $a$ ;  $a^1$ ,  $a^2$ , etc., are appearances, serially arranged under the conditions

$x$ ,  $y$ ,  $z$ , etc. And furthermore, it is *known*, because it is *experienced* as such. In a word, it is experienced and known as that of which  $a$ , under the conditions symbolized by  $x$ , is one appearance, and  $a^1$ , under the conditions symbolized by  $y$ , is another.

Finally, it should be added that these propositions throw light on what it means to *appear*. There is doubtless a sense—a rather trivial sense—in which what appears is the *appearance*. But we have discovered a factor which is not an appearance, but of which, under ascertainable conditions, certain appearances are the phenomenal equivalent. There is much more point, therefore, in saying that what appears is not the appearance as such, but that of which the latter *is* the appearance. In so far as appearances are attributed to this non-phenomenal, yet experienced, factor, experience itself compels us both to distinguish between real things and their appearances, and to assume that what appears is the independent Real.

### *Summary of the Preceding Argument*

To sum up, then, the central truth about experience, in the aspect which we are considering, that is, the aspect in which an object is presented to a conscious subject, is found in the fact that appearances are the equivalents, or, in the language of mathematics, the transformations of one another. As soon as this truth is perceived, it is seen that experience is no longer interpretable in terms of individual *experiences* or presentations. What we call experience, therefore, is something more than the substantial equivalent of the verb *to experience*, if the meaning of the verb is limited to individual moments. The

full force of the substantival expression appears only when we add to the idea of *experiencing*, the idea of repetition or plurality. It takes many experiences in the one sense to constitute an experience in the other ; and this statement contains the key to all the difficulties which arise from our propensity to look upon the object as one, while the appearances it presents are many.

The solution is, briefly, as follows. Wherever there occurs a series of presentations which we have ascertained to be the equivalents of one another, we treat the series as the content of a single experience, in which the object is an invariable. This must not be taken to mean that the object is the total series of transformable presentations. Rather it is the objective counterpart of the fact, guaranteed by experience, that one presentation is the equivalent of others. To experience a single object through a succession of presentations means to be able at sight to transform one presentation into its equivalent under any normal change of conditions, and to see that this operation implies an independent Real.

### *The Common-sense Views of 'Experience'*

So far, we have confined ourselves to that aspect of experience in which it reveals itself as the perception of an object. There is, however, another form of experience—that in which we experience our own mental states. To experience anger or pain, joy or disappointment, is not the same thing as experiencing an object of observation. In the case of our mental states we are no longer able to distinguish sharply between experiencing an object and the object ex-

perienced. The mental state, considered as an object of experience, has no existence apart from the experience of it, This much may be asserted with confidence ; but there remains a question which is not so easily disposed of. When we experience a mental state, is it the mental state as such which we experience, or is it *ourselves in that state* ?

Let us continue to direct our attention to the elucidation of the common-sense view. So long as we do so, there seems little doubt that such experiences must be interpreted as experiences of ourselves. Our mental states are not usually thought of as isolated facts or events, and just as in the previous case the plain man does not conceive the object to be nothing more than the series of his perceptions, so in the present case he does not conceive his self as nothing but the series of his mental states. On the contrary, he ascribes to that self something of the independent nature and invariability which in another sense he ascribes to the real object. *In another sense*, because it is not possible to treat the data, which in this instance are mental states, as a series of equivalents, and it is quite impossible to interpret the fact of selfhood as the objective counterpart of the transformability of one experience into another.

Furthermore, the invariability of the self is not the relatively simple thing which it is in the case of the object. It is an identity which is maintained in and through a succession of changes that are internal and even fundamental. Contrasting the constancy of the object with the constancy of the subject, we may say that the former rests on the equivalence of perceptions which experience has taught us to transform, whereas the non-equivalence of mental states is a

fundamental feature in the experience of a self. The facts which we are here facing are the indefinite plasticity and modifiability of human nature, the endlessly varied vicissitudes of human life. We are in the region of meanings and values which are not reducible, as meanings elsewhere are, to the mere *relatedness* of one objective content to another. The meanings in question must be understood not in the light of what it means for one object of perception to be related to another such object, but in the light of what it means for anything whatever, whether an object or a mental state, to be the object or the state *of a self*. The question, however, which concerns us is the question upon which the idea of self-identity rests. What grounds have we for thinking of ourselves as one and identical, in spite of the indefinite variability which seems to be the leading characteristic of the experience of selfhood?

The answer to that question will carry us far beyond the analysis of common sense; and to that task we must presently address ourselves. But before proceeding to the more fundamental inquiry, we must, for the sake of completeness, devote a little space to further analysis. It will be remembered that up to now we have been inquiring into the nature of experience, as commonly understood, with special reference to what we mean when we use the *verb* 'to experience'. Let us now ask what is ordinarily meant by the *substantival* equivalent of the verb. The question has already been touched upon in passing.

The noun 'experience' is ambiguous. It is sometimes taken to comprise whatever happens to us as conscious subjects. In this sense it is merely the

generic name for all 'experiences'. The point of view is that of *fact*. 'Experience' is the name for all experiences, or for any experience, considered as an event, or as events, in the natural world. It is a class-name.

From another point of view 'experience' is not a class-name, but the name of a normative conception. We speak of a *man of experience*, as if all men were not men of experience. Or, with reference to specific types of human activity, we speak of an experienced navigator or physician. By this we mean something more than a person who has had many individual experiences of navigating a vessel or of treating the sick. We mean that the many individual experiences have in them something of a cumulative nature, something which enables us to think of them not merely as happening, but as leaving a permanent and growing disposition in the subject. They are not like events of nature which happen and are done with.

The two meanings of the word are not unconnected. Experience in the first sense is thought of as leading to experience in the second—and experience in the second sense as dependent upon experience in the first. This brings us to another point.

The concept in the normative sense is also ambiguous. There are two ways in which we commonly appeal to experience as a criterion of truth. On the one hand we think of knowledge as the product, or perhaps the generic concept, of much experience; and truth as a name for the uniformity of many experiences. It is in this sense that we confide in the experience of the specialist, of the man of the world, of mankind at large, of the race. On the other hand we frequently appeal against the cumulative judg-

ments of experience in this sense to what we suppose the immediacy of individual experience. We put the distributive aspect of experience against the collective: we bring the wisdom of the ages and the pronouncements of expert knowledge to the touchstone of what we commonly call 'fact'.

*The Meaning of 'Data' of Experience: 'Sensa'  
not Absolutely Given*

This appeal to the facts, or the data,<sup>1</sup> as they are sometimes called, is a thing which is widely misunderstood and misrepresented. There is an inveterate tendency, from which even enlightened thinkers are frequently not immune, to think of the so-called data in a way which the term, it is true, would seem to imply, but which an elementary knowledge of psychology should have shown to be inadequate—namely, as something simple and given, the *elements* of experience.

This preoccupation with 'data' is usually associated with a view which would limit experience to the consciousness of an object on the part of a subject. That this is a very partial and one-sided account of experience I shall presently have occasion to point out; but it should be noted here that even if all ex-

<sup>1</sup> In employing the words 'fact' and 'datum' as virtually synonymous, I am merely conforming to popular usage. Had the purposes of the present inquiry demanded greater refinement, I should have had to distinguish between the two. The data, strictly speaking, are the contents of actual experience in the narrowest and most literal sense of the term. They are whatever can be perceived or felt in an experience of the moment or in a series of such experiences. In contradistinction to this, the facts are the contents of judgments based upon the data. Thus from the standpoint of an observer, the succession of appearances which I describe as *Caesar crossing the Rubicon* would be so many *data* of experience: it is a *fact* that Caesar crossed the Rubicon.

perience were of this type (which it is not), or if there were nothing else in it (which is far from being the case), we have no warrant for supposing that experience is the product of data, or even that it contains data in the sense in which this term is commonly understood.

The truth is that in experience there is nothing that is absolutely given ; or if anything is given, it is given in the form of those natural conditions upon which experience depends, but which do not ordinarily constitute any part of its content. This does not mean that they are unknown or unknowable, but only that the knowledge of them belongs, on the whole, not to experience as such, but only to certain special forms of experience which we call reflection or scientific investigation. One thing may be asserted with confidence. The supposed units of experience which we have lately learned to call ' *sensa* ', *i.e.* the objective content of sensation—and it is these that are ordinarily meant by data—cannot be regarded as given, except in a very limited sense. That is to say, granted an already existent experience in which they are present, it is possible to analyse them out of it. They are therefore given with the experience which includes them ; but they are not given in any sense in which the experience, of which they are the supposed elements, is not also given. We cannot look upon them as a given material which is pieced together into the totality of an experience. Experience no more implies them than they imply experience. In fact they are themselves the product of experience in a far more fundamental sense than any in which experience could be asserted to be a product of the *sensa* it contains. This is the main point.

Whatever experience implies in the way of a definite objective content is the product and not the material of experience. This does not mean that the *sensa*, far less the 'real' objects, are subjective in their nature, but only that they could never become the objects of experience unless experience and its processes were ready to make them so.<sup>1</sup>

In order to understand how this is possible, we must assume, what will hardly be denied, that experience occurs as a process. This means, as has been pointed out, that it is something more than the succession of its own presented contents. The idea of a process is not analysable into certain given factors, plus the succession of these in time, with the law of that succession. Rather the fact of change itself must be taken as prior to anything that can be discerned as its successive phases. Experience is such a process, and this implies that it cannot be understood as the sequence of its own objective contents. These contents are not data, for the simple reason that they do not embody what is most primitive in experience. It is indeed doubtful whether we are entitled to assume that anything is really primitive, but if this way of looking at things be insisted upon, we must seek the primitive factors in experience not in the individual contents, or in their succession, but in the universal nature of the process whereby these contents find their way successively into our consciousness.

<sup>1</sup> For an inquiry into the nature of the *sensa*, see *Prolegomena to an Idealist Theory of Knowledge* by Professor N. Kemp Smith. I would like to take this opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to Professor Kemp Smith, whose criticisms induced me to modify my original conception of nature by correcting what I now recognize to have been an excessively phenomenalist interpretation.

*'Instinct', not 'Sensa', the Elemental Thing in Experience*

Is there anything which is primitive, anything which might be described as a unit of experience, in this sense? The answer is that something of the sort is to be found, not in the contents of perceptual experience—the so-called 'sensa'—but in certain features which first make their appearance before anything so well defined as the *sensa* can possibly enter into the confused stream of our awareness. What is no less important, these features, which precede and condition the appearance of the *sensa*, reproduce themselves at every level of mental development, as the characteristic form of all experience. In so far then as we are entitled to regard anything as given, it is what we find at the beginning and at the end, as well as at every stage of the intervening process; and what we find to be given in this sense is the way in which the conscious life organizes itself upon a basis of instinct. Accordingly we shall substitute *instinct* for a mass of perceptual data as the elemental thing in experience. In so doing, we are virtually acknowledging that experience as such cannot be identified exclusively with that aspect or type of experience which consists in the presentation of an object to a conscious subject. The conative and emotional elements must be promoted to a status of equality with the cognitive in the unity of an experience which everywhere combines all three.

By instinct I mean almost exactly what Professor M<sup>c</sup>Dougall means; and I shall adopt his definition<sup>1</sup> with only slight verbal modifications. As regards the

<sup>1</sup> *Social Psychology*, ch. ii.

hereditary character of our instinctive tendencies, it seems worth noting that the heredity in question is racial rather than individual. Instinct, then, I shall define as a racially inherited psycho-physical disposition which expresses itself in the form of a peculiar sensitiveness to certain kinds of stimulation,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by a highly characteristic emotional excitement, and discharging itself in a well-defined and predetermined reaction. It will be observed that I accept the distinction which Dr. M<sup>c</sup>Dougall draws between reflex-action and instinct. The latter is characterized by the presence of a mental factor. It combines a psychical with a purely physiological ingredient; and in so far as our human nature is definable in terms of its original instinctive endowment, man must be conceived as a psycho-physical organism.

This view implies a certain corollary which is of the utmost importance for the interpretation of experience. If it is the case that human nature begins with the instincts, then since the instincts relate man from the first to his environment, material and social, it follows that in the development of experience the environment must be considered a contributory factor of the greatest importance.<sup>2</sup> Experience is not a thing that goes on behind the closed doors of an isolated subjectivity. Rather it is a thing which from the outset, and all along, involves the continuity of the conscious self and its environment.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The stimulation may be of a composite character, partly internal and partly peripheral. On this point *vide* Professor Hocking's *Human Nature and its Remaking*, p. 52, second edition.

<sup>2</sup> The solidarity of the conscious subject and the environment has been well brought out by Professor Dewey in his volume on *Human Nature and Conduct*.

<sup>3</sup> Of course it must be acknowledged that so far at least as experience is concerned, the environment is no more independent of the

*'Data' the Products of a 'First Stabilization'*

Beginning then with the idea of an original solidarity between the environment and the growing psycho-physical organism, we pass to a standpoint which enables us for the first time to understand the character of the so-called data, by interpreting them consistently with the true nature of experience. In the course of development a phase is reached which we shall call the *first stabilization*. The meaning of this expression may be explained as follows. Accepting the notion of adjustment as rightly expressing the changing relationship between the environment and the self, we are bound to think of this process as beginning with a state of extremely unstable equilibrium, and passing to a state of relatively stable equilibrium. But as the psycho-physical organism adjusts and readjusts itself to its environment until the point of relative stabilization is reached, there finally emerge certain stereotyped products, among them those well-defined presentational contents which are the familiar objects of our day-to-day experience. It is these that are meant when we speak of data; and the reason why we think of them as *data* is that in the course of normal experience they do not fail to make their appearance at the appropriate time. In this sense they may be *relied upon*.

self than the self is of the environment. In the cooperative activity of which experience is the product, the part played by the external world is determined by the fact that this world is a possible object of experience. It is the *experienced environment* that must be taken into account. There is a sense, therefore, in which all experience is a profoundly subjective thing. It is so in the sense that its locus and condition is always a self. If there were no selves, there would be no such thing as experience, and what we call an experience *of the world* is in every instance the experience *of some subject*.

It would be better, however, to consider them not as *given*, but as *guaranteed*—under conditions. They are not like inherited wealth, which comes to us all of a piece (it is only our original equipment of instincts that so comes), but like investments which may be trusted to mature in the fulness of time; and we appeal to them against the uncertainties of theory and the pretensions of dogma, not because they are elementary, but because they are natural, and because they embody the product of a stabilized experience.

The stabilization in question comes about by the same processes whereby experience evolves, and for that reason the products of the first stabilization have a peculiar value as a criterion. We ask ourselves, in effect, whether the later fabric of reflection, or the structure of tradition and conventional usage, is the product of an experience as universal and inevitable as are the processes of nature which enable us to recognize the familiar features of the world around us and to find our way about in it.

*The World of this 'First Stabilization' at once a Vantage-ground and an Enigma, with the consequence that there Emerge the Secular and Religious Points of View*

This conception of a first stabilization is of fundamental importance not only for the right interpretation of experience in general, but more particularly for the interpretation of religious experience; and I must pause for a moment to point out its significance in this respect. The first years of life are devoted to learning how to adjust the body and the mind to

the world, or, looking at the same thing from another point of view, how to induce the environment to report itself through the body in terms of physiological dexterity, and through the mind in terms of meaning. The method is largely one of trial and error. After a time most of the adjustments, mental and physiological, necessary for the maintenance of the organism under normal conditions, have been mastered. So far as the immediate future is concerned (the moment-to-moment business of living), the organism is ready for all the ordinary hazards of existence. The first stabilization is an accomplished fact.

But this first stabilization is not only a solution of the exquisitely complicated problem of adjusting the organism to the environment and the environment to the organism ; it is a vantage-ground from which the world, now grown familiar, is seen to have taken on the aspect of a new problem. The meaning of existence, it is felt, is no longer comprised in that subsistence which is now fairly assured. The familiar world has again become an enigma: the adjustments to it, which have become relatively easy, and in many cases effortless and automatic, fail to satisfy. New needs have grown up in the mind. The horizon of possibility has expanded all around, and the conscious life of man has become one vast surmise.

In this way there is generated a religious attitude to life. It will be seen that religion, at least in the modern sense of the term, presupposes a first stabilization. Without such, we might say, religion as we understand it would be impossible. But, we must add, were that stabilization complete,

there would be no place for the religious attitude. Religion, therefore, is a product of the fact that having stabilized his life so far, man finds that he has hardly begun to meet his yearnings after *life*. Upon it, as upon the exuberance of adolescence, there is apt to follow a sense of disappointment and disillusion.

In this, which is one of the supreme predicaments of human existence, man may adopt one or other of two policies. Either he may proceed to the task of exploring the new possibilities, of realizing experimentally the new suggestions of meaning and value to which his aspirations point ; or else he may fall back upon the established meanings, and devote himself to the task of consolidating his life and extending its scope upon a basis of just such possibilities of experience as have proved themselves realizable so far. In the one case he commits himself to a course that may demand a profound transvaluation of all values, a radical readjustment to all the conditions of earthly existence. In the other, he will resist all inducements to seek the meaning of life beyond these conditions. Thus emerge the religious and secular points of view from a diverse construction of the first stabilization.

*A Further Analysis of Experience : it involves  
more than Consciousness of Objects*

We must now resume the analysis of experience, disregarding the common-sense interpretation as reflected in language, but availing ourselves of such aid as may be found in philosophical theories. It is a remarkable fact that the philosophy which takes

experience as its supreme authority, the philosophy which calls itself empiricism, should, historically speaking, have laid the stress so insistently on one aspect or type of experience—the aspect or type in which experience defines itself as the contemplation of an object by a subject. The result of this has been that ‘empiricism’ has come very largely to mean nothing more nor less than *phenomenalism*. The inappropriateness of this is obvious if we consider that the root-idea in the word ‘empiricism’ is diametrically opposed to a phenomenalist interpretation of experience. Empiricism, strictly speaking, should be the doctrine of knowledge by trial ;<sup>1</sup> and this doctrine implies anything but that contemplative observation of appearances which is the essence of empiricism in the ordinary historical sense of the term.<sup>2</sup>

In the analysis which follows we shall begin with two assumptions which can hardly be disputed: (1) that we have no right to take it for granted that experience occurs only in the form of a consciousness of objects, or even that, granted such consciousness, it must be taken to represent what is most characteristic or most fundamental in experience ; (2) that consciousness of objects does actually occur and must therefore be admitted to a place in our analysis.

<sup>1</sup> If it had not been for this unfortunate confusion of language, ‘empiricism’ would have been the term most naturally applied to those philosophies of recent date that had to invent for themselves such names as Pragmatism, Instrumentalism.

<sup>2</sup> This description of empiricism may be thought too extreme, in view of the part played by experiment, as contrasted with mere observation. But the part played by experiment does not necessitate any modification of our statement. The sole purpose of experiment, from this point of view, is to secure access for the observer to otherwise inaccessible appearances.

*The Transition from the Common-sense to the Scientific Standpoint*

Beginning then with the fact that one of the typical forms of experience is that in which a subject is confronted with an object of observation, we must ask wherein the significance of such experience is to be found. The answer is contained in what has already been said as to the succession of such experiences. The meaning of the individual presentation is not revealed in the presentation as such, but in the relationship in which it stands to other presentations, and more particularly to those in conjunction with which it forms a well-defined series or system. As has been pointed out, the important thing about the individual phenomenon is that it occurs as a member in a transformation series. It therefore symbolizes the series of which it is a member. Looking at the question from the standpoint of the observer, we may say that experience is not the contemplation of perceptual contents taken one at a time, but a certain power of passing from one to another. This power depends upon the fact that the succession of appearances has its uniformities. Every problem of experience, in this sense of the term, may be stated in the formula: Granted any configuration of the objective contents of experience, to find our way to some other configuration.

Even from the phenomenalist point of view experience is always more than the appearance of a phenomenon or group of phenomena in consciousness: it is the utilization of the transformability and functional character of appearances; and its true nature is revealed only in the relationship of

experience to knowledge in general and to scientific knowledge in particular. Knowledge is acquaintance not only with phenomena but with the transformations of the phenomenal content, and in its scientific form it is such acquaintance organized and generalized. The transition from experience as such to science occurs when we first learn to formulate the practical problems of experience—the adjustment-problems—theoretically; that is, when, instead of seeking to transform a specific set of presentations into their ideal equivalents, we seek to ascertain what systematic transformations any experience may be expected to yield under any well-defined set of conditions. A scientific knowledge of nature may be defined as the ideal (or theoretical) system of all the transformations of experience (in its phenomenal aspect) that can be rendered exact, generalized and verified; and the progress of scientific knowledge is marked by the extent to which, in relation to the actualities of experience, it becomes something more than a mere generalization of particular instances, demanding immediate verification. When this stage is reached, the scientific mind passes freely, as in physics, from one generalization to another, and the work of verification becomes that of finding empirical meanings for principles that have been wrought out, in many cases, independently of experience altogether. The ideal is attained when it becomes possible to eliminate *the experience of individuals* from the content of scientific thinking. At this point the uniformities of experience are converted into the uniformity of scientific law by removing the conscious subject. The result is a skeleton framework of truth, into which can be fitted any experience whatever, and in rela-

tion to which, by a curious inversion of the natural order, all experience becomes hypothetical. That is to say, the experience of which scientific law is the interpretation is *experience in general*. Even here, however, the need of verification is not eliminated, although such verification is frequently accomplished only in an indirect and circumstantial fashion, and after it has been determined what results may be considered the experiential equivalent of scientific truth.<sup>1</sup>

In conclusion we may sum up the relation between science and experience as follows. As experience looks to science, the question is : Granted a conscious subject confronted with a phenomenal manifold, what possibilities of regular and exact transformations can be discovered in the latter ? As science looks to experience, the question is : Granted an exact and systematic framework of hypothetical transformations, what experiential equivalents can we find for it ?

*Knowledge of Existence: the False Assumption that it is exclusively Inferential*

We are now in a position to deal with a final predicament arising out of the relation of experience to existence. That predicament might be expressed by saying that while we are compelled to think of nature as the independently existing, our *knowledge* of it is always in some way determined by subjective limitations. Thus if we begin with the idea of existence, we are never sure what exactly it is that exists,

<sup>1</sup> For example, in the spectroscopic investigation of isotopes and of the chemical constitution of the heavenly bodies.

whereas if we begin with the object as known to us at any point in our ever-changing experience, we cannot be sure that what we know is one with what exists independently. In either case there is an apparent want of continuity between the fact of existence and the experienced content of the existent; and it is for this reason that, as has been pointed out, the fact of existence must sometimes be brought in as an added postulate.

The truth is that the whole business of natural knowledge is the collocation of appearances in series and systems, and that it is neither to the individual appearance as such nor to the series or system of appearances that we attribute independent existence, whether from the standpoint of science or from that of common-sense. Such existence is not presented, as the appearances are presented, individually and in their series. Rather it is a hypostatization of the fact that appearances occur in an orderly fashion, so that one can symbolize another. Is it the case, then, we must ask, that we have only an inferential or hypothetical knowledge of existence? The answer is that it would be so if experience were exhaustively defined as the succession of appearances or as the relation of a conscious subject to a world of objects. But that this is the case cannot for a moment be conceded.

The falsity of any such assumption—and the tacit assumption that experience is all of the subject-object type has played havoc with much European philosophy—is easily seen if we keep in mind some of the most obvious features of experience itself.

(1) As we pass gradually into a dreamless sleep, everything in the nature of definite objects disappears

before the last vestiges of consciousness itself have gone. As we emerge from a dreamless sleep we are conscious before we can be said to be definitely conscious of anything but ourselves. Thus the total span of consciousness is not co-terminous with the consciousness that defines itself in the relation of an object to a subject.

(2) Even when our experience assumes the form of a consciousness of objects, there is more in it than a succession of objective presentations. While we are contemplating objects, we are 'enjoying' our own mental states.<sup>1</sup> Or, as was said before, what it means to have an object implies what it means to be a subject.

(3) The unit of experience must be determined in relation to the fact that experience occurs not in isolated flashes of apprehension, but as a process in time. From this point of view the unit is seen to be not the cognition of an object, but a complex thing more nearly expressible in terms of instinctive process, in which cognition is only one aspect.

(4) It is not at all certain that experience is co-terminous even with consciousness. There are operations of the unconscious mind which so closely resemble conscious processes that it becomes at least a question whether we have any right to refuse to them the designation of experience. For example, our conscious experience is in large measure determined by the power of the mind to select from the total field of possible objects those upon which attention shall be concentrated. In the unconscious state the

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Professor Alexander for the terms 'contemplation' and 'enjoyment' as expressing the difference between two unmistakable features in all our experience of the objective world.

mind evinces precisely the same power of selection. What is no less surprising is the fact that the principle of selection is, in some instances at least, the *meaning* rather than the *intensity* of the stimulus. This is shown by what is matter of common observation, the fact, namely, that persons who will sleep through loud sounds that are meaningless, wake instantly upon the faintest suggestions of a sound that has come to acquire a special interest for them. Such centrally-initiated direction of attention, especially as it involves the ideal element of meaning, would seem to imply everything that invests our conscious states with the significance of experience; and this suggests that we should reverse the traditional procedure, and instead of defining experience in terms of consciousness, should regard consciousness as a special form and product of experience. If so, we should have to think of experience as *either* conscious *or* unconscious and of consciousness itself as *the experience of being conscious*.

(5) Finally, if our surmise is correct, and there is such a thing as unconscious, as well as conscious, experience, may we not extend our conception still further, from the unconscious states of conscious or potentially conscious beings—what we sometimes call the sub-conscious—to the unconsciousness of beings that are presumably incapable of conscious states? For example, is it not thinkable that even inanimate things, provided they have a claim to be considered *selves*, may have an unconscious experience of their own?

*Consciousness to be Defined in Terms of Experience,  
not Experience in Terms of Consciousness*

Such a suggestion will no doubt appear at first sight highly audacious, as it is undoubtedly highly speculative. What meaning, it will be asked, can possibly be attached to the idea of an experience from which the element of consciousness is absent, not merely in the sense that it is in abeyance, but in the sense that it is impossible? The answer I should be inclined to give is as follows. If we are entitled to regard consciousness itself as an experience among others, if, that is to say, consciousness is simply the peculiar experience of being conscious, then we are forced to look to something more general than consciousness for the definition of experience. This something more general will naturally occur wherever experience occurs. It will, of course, be found where experience assumes the form of being conscious, as well as when it assumes other forms. If, then, we can discover what it is that renders consciousness an experience, we may, by the same act, be able to discover what it is that gives the character of experience to anything whatever.

Let us ask, then, how we must represent to ourselves the ideas of experience and of consciousness, so that the relation between the two will be expressed by saying, not that experience is consciousness, but that consciousness is an experience.

The theoretical demands of the problem will be met if we represent consciousness not as a *relation* between the conscious subject (the knower) and his object (the known), but as a *state of the subject*. The

full meaning of this suggestion can hardly be made apparent without further exposition, an exposition that will involve other problems besides that of experience. This must be postponed to the following chapter. But there are certain points which, in a purely theoretical way, can be made good forthwith.

It is not difficult to see that if consciousness is an experience, the experience of being conscious means neither more nor less than to be in a state of consciousness. This in turn implies a permanent, self-identical subject capable of being in a variety of states, of which consciousness is one.

Furthermore, if consciousness is one state among others, then it is at least theoretically possible that the same reasons which lead us to describe the state of being conscious as an experience may entitle us to describe other states in the same way. The one fundamental condition is that there should be subjects or selves to which states may be attributed. Of course we have been dealing so far with theoretical possibilities. We have not yet seriously asked what is meant by a self and by a state, or whether selves and their states exist. Again, it is always possible that even if they do exist, there may be reasons why all of these states should not be interpreted as experiences, or as implying experience. Indeed it is quite thinkable that the notion of experience should be strictly limited to conscious states and states related to the latter in the way in which the subconscious is related to the conscious. But however that may be, in view of the gradations of consciousness itself, and the close relationship between the conscious and the unconscious, there would seem to be the strongest possible reasons for defining

consciousness in terms of experience rather than experience in terms of consciousness.

We shall now proceed to a re-examination of the whole question in the light of certain other problems which are inseparably connected with it, and apart from which its full significance cannot be seen.

## CHAPTER XXI

### EXPERIENCE, CONSCIOUSNESS AND ACTIVITY

#### *Conclusions reached in the Argument of the two preceding Chapters*

IN the two preceding chapters I have dealt with three inextricably inter-related conceptions—those of nature, existence and experience. Before proceeding further I must state the problem as it now defines itself in terms of these three conceptions. To begin with, what is known as nature must obviously be thought of as existing ; but it is not at all clear that existence, as we are bound to *think* it, is attributable to nature as we *know* it. For example, what we know of the external world occurs very largely in the form of systematically ordered appearances. We know the appearances in the limited sense that they are actually presented to us in experience ; and we know the systems or series in which they occur, for such systems or series represent the order of their presentation. Furthermore, it is true that we attribute existence to the appearances as such. But to say that the appearances exist is as nearly meaningless as any intelligible statement could be. Or rather, the meaning of the statement is dependent upon the answer to the question whether there is or is not something behind them—something of which they are the appearances. If it is the case that they are the appearances of something which is more than an appear-

ance, then the sense in which they can be said to exist as appearances is not the same as the sense in which the reality behind them exists. The distinction is akin to that between the Kantian *phenomenal reality* and *noumenal reality*.

Now the question of existence in these two senses is one which we have referred for solution to the facts of experience. Undoubtedly we have an experience which is the experience of phenomena, and this is the guarantee of phenomenal reality. It is the guarantee of nothing more; and in insisting on experience as the sole criterion of existence, Kant was thinking only of that form of existence which we have found to be so nearly meaningless. That it did not exhaust his conception of the truly existent is clear from the fact that he admits a thinkable existence beyond the possibility of human experience.<sup>1</sup> For him, however, 'thinkability' can never be a guarantee; and I concur so far at least that I shall make no attempt to avail myself of the evidence of existence which is derived from mere 'thinkability.' In spite of certain technical defects in his refutation of the Ontological Argument, defects which have been pointed out by Hegel,<sup>2</sup> Kant's conclusions seem to me to be sound. Kant, however, falls into the error of identifying experience as a whole with what we have found to be only one type or aspect of experience, that, namely, in which phenomena are presented to consciousness. For him the meaning of

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion of the relations between the phenomenal and the real in Kant's philosophy *vide* two articles by the author: *Kant's View of Metaphysics*, and *Kant's Phenomenalism in its Relation to Subsequent Metaphysics*, *Mind*, vol. xxv, N.S. (1916), Nos. 97 and 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, § 51.

experience is exhaustively expressed in the formula: What it is to have an object; and objectivity is limited to the world of phenomena.<sup>1</sup> Our point of view differs from this in recognizing other types or aspects of experience, which may be summarized in the formula: What it means to be a subject. Of course Kant in a sense did not fail to recognize this side of the truth. In moral and aesthetic experience he finds a type of experience which has more in it than the mere presence of a phenomenal object presented to a conscious observer. The view which has been here advocated, however, still differs from his in its insistence on two things: (1) The ultra-phenomenal aspect of experience, which is insisted on in the principle that what it means to have an object implies what it means to be a subject. (2) The distinction between what it means to be a subject and what it means to have an object. In other words, when any experience is the experience of an object, it is always at the same time something more; and there are forms of experience which are not the experience of having any object at all.

In view of this, we reach the following conclusions. Granted the existence of a phenomenon, that existence is not a fact of the same order as the existence of the subject. This statement, whatever else it may imply, must be taken to mean at least that the experience of having an object in the form of a presented appearance guarantees the existence of the subject in more senses than it does the

<sup>1</sup> Professor Kemp Smith has shown that the appearance of a 'non-empirical' or 'transcendental object =  $x$ ' in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is an intruding survival from the pre-Critical phase of Kant's thought. Vide his *Commentary to Kant's 'Critique of Pure Reason'*, Pt. II, ch. ii.

existence of the object. Thus the existence of the object is guaranteed by the bare fact that it is presented ; but the existence of the subject is guaranteed both by the fact that an object is presented and by the fact that the subject experiences what it is to have an object. The difference may be expressed by saying that in so far as the object is thought of as an appearance, the experience which is the guarantee of its existence is not its experience, but the experience of the conscious subject.

It must not be supposed that what I am advocating is subjectivism. On the contrary it will be seen, when the argument is complete, that my position is as far removed from subjectivism as anything could be. What I am trying to do is to hold up the problem of existence to the light of experience. I am trying to discover what experience can tell us about the fact of *existing*, and the point which has just been made is that to experience the existence of anything whatever is, *ipso facto*, to exist, whereas merely to be experienced, as an appearance is experienced, leaves the question of existence in some doubt.

*Activism versus Phenomenalism : What is implied in being a Subject over and above what it is to have an Object*

It will be observed that recourse has here been had to the distinction between active and passive verbs. I have spoken of *experiencing* in contradistinction to *being experienced*. Now to attribute significance to the distinction, as has been done, is a procedure that calls for justification. It is a procedure which implies an activist interpretation of reality in

one of its aspects, and that interpretation is directly opposed to the phenomenalist view of nature, which is a philosophical generalization from natural knowledge. We cannot take another step forward, therefore, until the issue of phenomenism *versus* activism has been dealt with. The question comes to a focus in the meaning of the oft-repeated assertion that what it is to have an object *implies*, but is not identical with, what it is to be a subject. What is really implied, we must ask, in being a subject, over and above what it is to have an object?

I shall proceed to answer this question in a roundabout way, and shall begin by pointing out one interesting consequence of identifying the two concepts. The assumption that to have an object is the same thing as to be a subject inevitably leads to the interpretation of the second concept in terms of the first. The reason for this is obvious. If the nature of the subject is revealed in the fact that objects exist for it in consciousness, then clearly the presence of objects in consciousness is the one thing that matters to the subject. It is the one thing that can be known about the *knower*. Thus the interpretation of the inner life of consciousness is found to be expressible only in terms of a phenomenal manifold. This is the predicament of subjective Idealism, a doctrine in which, as has already been pointed out, the subject, paradoxically enough, is nothing, and the object everything. The same is true of Kant's phenomenism, where the concrete subject is lost to view in the characterless noumenal ego. As for the realistic phenomenism of to-day, this is just subjective Idealism over again, with the subject left out.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The only difference between the independent Reals of the one

From the standpoint of subjective Idealism and of phenomenalistic Realism, therefore, we should have to answer our question by saying that there is nothing whatever implied in being a subject over and above what is implied in having an object—or (in terms of Berkeleian principle), if the *esse* of objects is *percipi*, the *esse* of subjects is *percipere*. Unfortunately there is no difference whatever between the fact which we call the *percipi* of objects and the fact which we have called the *percipere* of the subject, and the Realism which denies that the latter is a second fact added to the former is only bringing out the logic of the subjectivist position. That logic amounts either to a denial of consciousness altogether or else to an insistence that consciousness be interpreted in exactly the same way in which any phenomenon of experience is interpreted—namely, as a datum or series of data.

### *The Denial of Consciousness in Naturalistic Phenomenalism*

Let us take these two possibilities in turn. First, then, there is the denial of consciousness. That any-

theory and the Ideas of the other is that the Reals exist by themselves, and are only sometimes perceived to exist. In this case their nature as perceived is the same as their nature unperceived. They have merely come into a new relation. The Ideas on the other hand exist only in so far as they are perceived; but for this very reason the fact that they are perceived makes no difference to them. They are in no way affected by that fact. One point of difference remains. The relation between the Reals and the mind is similar in its general formal character to any relation between Reals; whereas for subjective Idealism the relation between minds and Ideas is not similar to the relation between Ideas. Rather it is a perfectly unique relation—the relation between *percipere* and *percipi*—or, more strictly, is not a relation at all. Mind is not an Idea, nor do we have an Idea of mind.

thing so obvious and apparently fundamental should ever have been denied savours of paradox; and yet if we consider the position in the light of its assumptions, and more particularly of the view of consciousness which underlies it, the argument is not difficult to grasp.

The idea seems to be that to assume consciousness is to *add* something which is quite meaningless and gratuitous to the factors of the case—something, moreover, which we cannot *observe* to be present. When a phenomenon makes its appearance, it is not two things, but one thing, that appears. Or rather, since no phenomenon ever actually appears alone, and since every appearance brings with it certain correlatives (as, for example, the visible object implies an organ of vision), the accompanying phenomena are of the same order (namely, objects or events) as those which they accompany in experience. To say that appearances are relative to the conditions under which they are perceived is therefore to say, not that they are relative to a perceiving mind, but only that they are related to the organs of sense. Thus, search as we will, the only thing we can *discover* by means of experience is phenomena and still more phenomena. As regards the relativity just referred to, it is clear that consciousness can have nothing to do with it, since consciousness can make no difference to anything. By correlation we are to understand compresence in a phenomenal manifold. For example, when the phenomenon which we call a visible object is present, the phenomenon which we call the eye is present with it.

It will be seen that this view implies a particular interpretation of consciousness, with which the view

itself stands or falls. What is implied is that if consciousness is to be admitted at all, it can only be as a phenomenon among phenomena. Only as a *phenomenon* can it be an object of observation, and therefore of experience. But it assuredly cannot be admitted in this sense. So far the phenomenalist is entirely right. Consciousness is not a datum in the way in which phenomena are data. That is, it is not given *to* observation as they are given. The conclusion is that it is not given at all. Now it is just here that the view we are examining breaks down. For, as we saw in the previous chapter, there is *nothing* that is given to us in the way here implied. When the question is placed upon a basis of experience, the so-called data are not discoverable as something already there. They come into existence along with a developing experience, and make their appearance only at the requisite level of development. This is not to be taken as a denial of their objectivity. They are certainly objective, since they are the guaranteed product of a normal process. It may be that they exist (or that some analogue of them exists) independently; but if so, this does not alter the nature of experience. In so far as we can think of them as given at all, they are given under a set of conditions, of which experience is the totality. Strictly speaking, what is given is this totality of conditions, and the only question that remains is the question whether among the conditions involved there are some that are *not* the objective content of presentations.

That such is the case is a conclusion that follows irresistibly from a consideration of certain features which reproduce themselves uniformly in experience, make it where we may. For example, the conative

and emotional elements, which are never absent, are not reducible to the objective content of our perceptions. And yet they are not given in the sense in which presentations are given. That is to say, they are not given *to* observation. On the other hand, if it is the case that the only thing really given is experience itself, these non-presentational aspects of experience are given *with* the experience which includes them. The whole question turns upon the difference between being given *to* and given *with*; and as soon as this distinction is grasped, it is seen that although consciousness is not given to us as a phenomenon is given to an observer, under certain conditions of experience, this fact has no bearing on the question whether consciousness exists. Independently altogether of the question *what* it is that we experience, there is such a thing as experiencing consciousness; and there is no sense in which we can be said to experience phenomena that does not imply the possibility of experiencing consciousness itself. We shall therefore bring this phase of our inquiry to a close by pointing out that when an object is given to consciousness in experience, consciousness is certainly not given as an additional object *to* itself; but that it is given *with* the experience of having an object.

*The Alternative Naturalistic View: Consciousness to be treated like any Datum of Experience, and not as implying the Existence of a Personal Self*

So much for that form of naturalistic theory which would deny the reality of consciousness alto-

gether. In the course of our argument we have by implication disposed of the second form of the theory as well—the form, namely, which, while not denying the fact of consciousness, insists that consciousness shall be treated like any datum of experience. If what has been already said is accepted as conclusive, there is really no need to pursue the subject further. None the less it is only fair to allow the advocates of this second view to state their case in accordance with their general principles. The question is : What do I mean when I think of myself as conscious, or when I attribute consciousness to another person ? And the answer of naturalism is that while consciousness must be acknowledged as a fact of experience, it does not imply the existence of a person or self.

Naturalism maintains, then, that so far at least as human knowledge is concerned, that alone is real which can be observed to exist, or the existence of which can be inferred from actually observed existences. This is what gives space and time their importance as defining the conditions of physical reality. Space and time are either (1) themselves actually observed ; or (2) they are the forms under which all empirically observed phenomena must appear ; or (3) they are the relational systems through which we connect the observed with the observed and the unobserved alike.

Now it was pointed out by the greatest of philosophical naturalists, Hume, that there is one thing which I commonly suppose to exist, but which I cannot submit to the test of actual observation, namely, myself.

“ For my part,” says Hume, in a passage

which has become classical, "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception."<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion of Hume and of his naturalistic successors is that the only kind of thing for which I have any theoretical right to claim existence is my observed states. They alone, as they succeed or accompany one another in their associated groups, constitute what I call myself. If this is so, it is obviously incumbent on me, at least from the standpoint of theoretical consistency, to give up talking about *myself*, and indeed to abandon the use of personal pronouns altogether. Instead of saying: "I know", I ought to speak, in a way suggested by William James, of one experience knowing another,<sup>2</sup> or, as Bertrand Russell does, of data being criticised by data.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Book I, part iv, sect. vi; Green and Grose's edition, p. 534, Selby-Bigge's edition, p. 252.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the chapter on "The Relation between Knower and Known" in *The Meaning of Truth*, p. 106.

<sup>3</sup> *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 67. This is a beautiful example of the crowning fallacy of naturalism. The primary question is not really the one suggested by Mr. Russell—viz. whether criticism implies or does not imply an ideal standard, but whether, upon naturalistic presuppositions, it is possible to retain any such idea as that of criticism at all. Let us see what, upon the presuppositions in question, we are entitled to assume. That data occur may pass without question. It may also be taken for granted that one datum can give place to another. But how this fact can be taken to mean that the second datum *criticises* the first, it is impossible to understand. Indeed, so far from data criticizing data, even instincts, although frequently opposed in the most strikingly antithetical fashion, cannot be thought of as criticising instincts.

So far so good. We have discovered a method of expressing ourselves without the use of personal pronouns. But we must go further, and get rid of active verbs. For just as I cannot, strictly speaking, be said to observe *myself*, but only a succession of my states, so I cannot possibly observe anything in the nature of *activity* either in my mental states or out of them. At this point, however, one very obvious objection occurs. "Are not my volitions", it will be asked, 'active mental states, and do I not experience them as such? Do I not *experience* activity, therefore, in so far as I experience my states of volition?" To this the naturalist replies: "My states of volition are, like other mental states, observable phenomena; so that when I suppose myself to experience activity in them, I am really only observing feelings—possibly in this case a feeling of effort—and an observed feeling of effort is not an experienced activity. It does not *do* anything. It just occurs, and can be observed to occur. That is the utmost that can be said of any observed phenomenon." My volitions then are mental states, and are to be explained, like any other mental states, mechanistically—that is, by stating their relations to other states in the same system or series.

The problem is now to find some method of expressing the fact or the situation which I usually express by saying "I know", "I do", without the use either of the personal pronoun or the active verb. Fortunately the logic of naturalism, which is the logic of relations, has shown us how to transform any such assertion so as to interpret the fact—say the fact of *knowing*—as a relation between one set of data, which we may call the knower (meaning

thereby the knowing state), and another set of data, which we call the object known.

Let A and B be the knower and the known respectively ; and let the knower-known relation be expressed by the symbol  $r$ . Then since on this view the terms exist independently of the relation, and the relation is independent of the specific content of the terms, the following consequences ensue. (1) The term A, which stands for the knower, cannot be said to *know*, because the knowledge pertains not to the term but to the relation  $r$ . (2) The term B, whose nature (as an object) it is to be independent of the fact of *being known*, must *a fortiori* be distinct from the fact of *knowing*. It remains to locate the knowing in the relation. But a relation cannot *know* ; it can only be known. In this case, however, the knowledge with which we are dealing is the knowledge not of the relation  $r$ , but of the object B, and the knowledge of B is not a fact that can characterize the relation  $r$ . This does not mean that A's knowledge of B cannot be regarded as a relation of B to A ; but it does imply that the idea of a relationship, in this instance, cannot be applied without serious modification of the theory of relations. For instance, if the relationship which we call knowledge is a relationship in which A stands as a term, the term A is not unaffected by the relationship in which it stands. It has a content which is no other than the relationship in question. But if so, the relationship is more than a relationship. It is a *state* of A. Moreover the state or content is A's knowledge of B. A's knowledge of B, therefore, is not only a relation in which A stands to B ; it is an inner condition of A.

It would seem, then, that the attempt to express

the knower-known relation in the mechanistic formula of natural knowledge has proved destructive of the formula itself in this one instance. The break-up of the knower-known relation and the relegation of the knower component to the knower-term means that the knower-term, whether a self or a mental state, is so far identical with the relation in which it stands. The relation is, therefore, not strictly speaking a relation at all, in the naturalistic sense, but is a function. This may be taken as the differentia and formula of activity, and as our warrant for the use of active verbs in a sense not reducible to a statement of relations.

In other words, using the terminology of naturalism, we may define activity as a limiting case of relationship, in which one of the terms, contrary to the rule, is in whole or in part identical with the relationship itself.

*Whether the Concept of Activity can be extended  
to other than Conscious Beings*

It will be observed that we have justified the concept of activity in only one instance ; and it is a fact of first-rate importance that we should have discovered activity where we have discovered consciousness—in the relation of knower to known. It will however be necessary to ask whether we have any right to extend the concept to other than conscious beings. In order to do so, we must start with the activity which is best known to us through actual experience. This is the activity of which knowing is an example. In general it is the activity involved in the idea of *doing*. Let us ask what it means to *do* anything.

I have already noticed the naturalist objection to the ordinary view of volition. Mr. Broad has some interesting remarks on the subject. In these he attempts to emancipate us from what has undoubtedly become the inveterate habit of our minds. Referring to activity in general, Mr. Broad writes :

“ Some people have thought that the observation of our volitions and their effects could prove it. This opinion, however, is ridiculous. No doubt, when I will to move my body I do have a peculiar feeling of effort, and so too when I try to remember something that I have forgotten. But then I am a spirit which has to use a body to exercise its volitions, and it is not at all surprising that the use of my body should give me feelings which I call feelings of effort, since I know on other grounds that the changes in my body are capable of producing feelings in me.”<sup>1</sup>

In reply to this I should point out in the first place that Mr. Broad's criticism is based upon a false *analysis*. By the experience of activity which I call a volition I assuredly do not mean “ a peculiar feeling of effort ”. A feeling of effort is of course a thing which I often observe as one of my mental states ; but an *observed* feeling of effort is quite a different thing from an act of the will. A volition, even though it may be possible to observe it, does not consist in any observed phenomenon. Like consciousness itself, volition is an experience ; but it is not an experience in which an object is presented for our contemplation.

In the second place, it sometimes happens that the

<sup>1</sup> *Perception, Physics and Reality*, pp. 80-81.

feeling of effort is not present at all, or is present in an almost imperceptible degree. When activity is at its maximum, it is frequently characterized by a seeming absence of any such feeling. It is true that this is not always the case, and that a feeling of effort may be taken as a sign of activity. The reason of this is worth pointing out. We must first distinguish between effort and the feeling of effort. Effort may be nothing other than activity itself. It is something that we *put forth*. But it is activity under certain limiting conditions. When these conditions occur, activity assumes the form of effort, and the feeling which accompanies the activity is the product of the conditions which obstruct it. It will not be forthcoming in the absence of the conditions—obstruction, physical weakness, etc.—which produce it. In this case it may well happen (and it does actually happen) that activity is experienced without this particular type of phenomenal equivalent. Hence even when a consciousness of effort is present, it does not serve to *define* activity. Rather it defines itself by contrast with the activity which it implies, while the activity defines itself as the power, actually exercised, to overcome an obstruction and so to eliminate the feeling of effort.

A second and powerful objection to the view which sees in volition the type of activity, occurs among Hume's arguments against causality.<sup>1</sup> Briefly paraphrased and modernized, Hume's contention is substantially as follows. Between the volition, which is supposed to be the actuating power in our bodily movements, and these movements themselves there

<sup>1</sup> *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, section vii, part i.

is a vast chain of physiological intermediaries—cerebral, neural and muscular processes. It is these intermediate processes, *if anything at all*, of which we must think as set in motion by the action of our wills. Yet we never do think of them in this way, and that for the very sufficient reason that most of us know nothing about them. I never *will* the molecular change in my brain which causes me to walk. Indeed I do not know how to will a neural process. I will to walk. But the act of walking is caused, *if at all*, not by the act of will which is so far removed from it in the chain of causes and effects, but by the physiological process which immediately precedes it. Apparently then volition, if it is the power to *do* anything, is not the power to do the things which we think of ourselves as doing, the things which constitute its own ideal content. On the other hand, we cannot say it is the power to do certain things of which we are completely unconscious ; for if they are things which we are not conscious of doing, we cannot be said to *will* them.

It must be admitted that the difficulty raised by Hume is a formidable one. At first sight it might even appear insuperable. But a little reflection will show that it belongs to a class of difficulties which we have learned how to dispose of. Hume's argument is only another example of the inveterate tendency of empiricism to interpret all experience from the standpoint of phenomenalism. From this point of view to experience anything is to have it presented to us as an object of observation—whereas it ought to be apparent that in every experience there is something that is not so presented, namely, the act or state whereby we become conscious of what we

experience. Hume's analysis suffers from the same defect as that of Mr. Broad—incompleteness. If we hold fast to the total nature of the experience in question, we see that it includes not only a bodily movement which may be observed like any other phenomenon of nature, but an *experienced volition* which, although we are conscious of it, is not a mere *object* of observation. With this distinction in mind, let us try to analyse the experience which we describe, by the aid of an active verb, as *moving*.

First, then, there is the will to move, which, as we have just seen, is not to be identified with a feeling of effort. Rather the volition must precede the feeling, and unless it were so, there would be no feeling of effort at all.<sup>1</sup> This of itself throws light upon the nature of volition. It shows that volition, or at least the conative attitude of which volition is a developed

<sup>1</sup> It would be interesting to compare Mr. Broad's remarks with what Hume has to say as to the part played by the feeling of effort—what he calls the “animal *nisus*”—in creating the impression of power. “It may be pretended”, writes Hume, “that the resistance which we meet with in bodies, obliging us frequently to exert our force, and call up all our power, this gives us the idea of force and power. It is this *nisus*, or strong endeavour, of which we are conscious, that is the original impression from which this idea is copied. But, first, we attribute power to a vast number of objects, where we never can suppose this resistance or exertion of force to take place; to the Supreme Being, who never meets with any resistance; to the mind in its command over its ideas and limbs, in common thinking and motion, where the effect follows immediately upon the will, without any exertion or summoning up of force; to inanimate matter, which is not capable of this sentiment. *Secondly*, This sentiment of an endeavour to overcome resistance has no known connexion with any event: What follows it, we know by experience; but could not know it *a priori*. It must, however, be confessed, that the animal *nisus*, which we experience, though it can afford no accurate precise idea of power, enters very much into that vulgar, inaccurate idea, which is formed of it.” *Enquiry*, section vii, part 1, footnote; edition of G. & G., p. 56, edition of S.-B., p. 67. Cf. another note, edition of G. & G., p. 64, edition of S.-B., p. 77.

form, must be assumed as a primitive type of experience. For if, as would be the case on any empirical transcript of the situation, a *feeling* of effort is a datum of experience, the effort which conditions the *feeling* has an even greater right to be considered a datum. Only, it is a datum which is given, not as an object of observation, nor as a gift is given, *to* a beneficiary, but as a gift is given, or a service rendered, *by* a benefactor.

*The Fundamental Cleavage in the Experience of Action: the Connection in Experience of the Two Aspects*

But though activity in this sense is an experience, and a primitive type of experience, we must not assume that it is simple. In the case before us, that of conscious, volitionally directed activity, we can distinguish at least three factors—the will to do, *that which* we will to do, and the doing of it.

Let us consider the second of these. The question comes to this: What is it we will to do when we will to move the body? The answer involves a distinction which has already been drawn in the case of the desire to live. In considering the nature of this desire, we saw that what is really desired is more life—that is to say, the actualization of a life which, so far as the desire itself is concerned, does not as yet exist, or exists only in an ideal sense. It is indeed not something ideal which is desired, for desire aims at an actualization; but the actual object of the desire, so long as we only desire it, remains an idealization. In the same way the object of volition, so far as its relation to the volition is

concerned, exists only as an ideal end, even though what we will is the realization of that end. The relation between the two first factors, therefore, may be expressed by saying that the volition is an actual experience of activity with an ideal content ; and together these two factors mark themselves off as an undivided whole of experience, which we might call the will to do, against the action which ensues from the will.

When we come to the third factor, we are confronted with a highly anomalous situation. In the moment of its realization the action presents itself in two profoundly different types of experience. (1) We experience the *actual doing* of what we willed to do, and (2) the action reports itself to us phenomenally under the aspect of an observed motion. The experience of moving is thus a two-sided thing, and moving is experienced in two different ways. A further consideration of these two latest aspects of the case reveals the fact that the first of them, the experience of doing, conforms to the same type of experience as the volition ; it is an experience of activity ; while the second belongs to another type—the subject-object type of experience. It is here that the fundamental cleavage occurs. Taking the experience in its totality, therefore, we conclude that it falls into two divisions : (1) the experience of doing what we will, and (2) the experience of observing the phenomenon which we call movement or change of place.

There is, however, a still further aspect of the total experience which we have not noticed—the connection, namely, *in experience*, of the two aspects. In actual experience we interpret the phenomenal

aspect of the total event very much as we interpret the successive individual presentations in a series of presentations. That is to say, we treat the motion presented to our observation as the phenomenal equivalent of the movement which we experience directly as our own activity. Once again it is the transformability of one aspect of experience into another that furnishes the key to the interpretation of the experience as a whole. This transformability, by investing any phase of the total experience with the meaning of the whole, enables us to disregard individual features, and to pass with the greatest economy of attention from one point to another. Thus when we have learned to direct our bodily movements to their ends, we do not need to observe these movements in detail. We know that the phenomenal equivalent will be forthcoming if we care to look for it ; but as it interests us only in spots, we concentrate our attention at the vital points. There can be no doubt that this is how we do actually experience the world around us in relation to ourselves as conscious and active beings. And so we reach a conception of experience which is neither purely activist nor purely phenomenal, but which moves from the experience of action to the experience of phenomena and back again with the utmost freedom and address, in accordance with the varying needs of adjustment.

*The Consequent Assumption on which the whole Conscious Life is based ; that one and the same thing reports itself to me directly as my own Activity and indirectly as an Observable Change in Space-time*

Human experience as a whole must, therefore, be interpreted as a sustained process of accommodation, whereby we utilize all the resources of transformation in the interest of our ideal purposes. And I should maintain that this is a much more accurate transcript of what experience means to us—what it means to have certain forms of experience—than can be found in any phenomenalist interpretation. I *catch* my total experience, so to speak, at two points, (1) as an experience of activity, and (2) as a movement of the body in a phenomenal world ; and experience itself seems to guarantee what is undoubtedly the assumption on which my whole conscious life is based. That assumption may be expressed as the following principle : It is one and the same thing which reports itself to me directly as my own activity, and indirectly as an observable change of appearances in the world of space and time. In other words, and in conformity with the principle that appearances are the appearances *of something*, motion, in this case at least, would seem to be nothing but the appearance which activity assumes when viewed from the outside under the conditions of space, time and human perception. To the phenomenalist it must indeed be granted that activity is not an observed *phenomenon* of experience ; but observation is not the only *type* of experience ; and the significant thing is that in one highly crucial

group of instances the observable phenomenon of motion is correlated with an experience of activity in such a way that each becomes the equivalent of the other. And, what is more significant still, this mutual equivalence is itself an empirically ascertainable fact, and is vouched for and verified by every advance in actual experience.

*A further all-important Question: Do Things Move in the Activist Sense of the term 'Move'?*

This raises an issue of incalculable importance. If it is the case that in one great province of human experience motion has been discovered experimentally to be the phenomenal equivalent of activity, it follows by logical conversion that in some instances at least activity is the equivalent of motion. The question then comes to be whether and how far we are entitled, on grounds of experience, to interpret the phenomenon of motion in the world around us as an indication of activity in the contents of that world. In other words, do things *move* in the activist sense of the term?

*The Distinction between Facts and Modes of Experience*

The answer to this question involves a distinction which has yet to be made clear—the distinction between *facts* and *modes* of experience. That we ourselves exist is a fact, but we do not *experience* our existence in the first instance as a fact, the content of a noun clause, of which we are the subject. Our existence is not in any sense an *object* of experience ;

rather it is experience itself yielding up one of its meanings—to wit, what it means to be a subject, when we are the subject in question. In this sense I call it a mode.

The same thing is true of activity. The activity which I experience as mine is experience itself yielding up another of its meanings—namely, what it means to be an agent, when I myself am the agent.

In contradistinction to this, the existence of the object, which is guaranteed by experience, does not relate itself to the experience, which is its guarantee, as the existence of the subject relates itself to the subject's experience. That is to say, the object's existence does not go with the experience of *having* an object, as the subject's existence goes with the experience of *being* a subject. Existence in this case is not simply experience itself yielding up still another of its meanings. We cannot tell from experience what it means for an object to exist, as we can tell what it means for a subject to exist ; and in this sense we cannot *experience* the existence of an object at all.

None the less we have experience of objects, and, in the sense explained, we have experience of independently existing real objects. If, then, we cannot experience what it means for them to exist, in what sense do we experience the existence which we attribute to them ? In the sense that we cannot have an object unless the object is there, and unless this fact is revealed to us by the same act of perceptual experience whereby the object itself is revealed. The existence of the object goes with the object, but not as the existence of the subject goes with the subject.

The one is objectively experienced, as the other is subjectively experienced. This means that what we experience as the *existence* of the object, in contradistinction to the object itself, is the *fact* that the object exists, and not what existence means as experienced either by the object or the subject.

*The Application of the Distinction, in answer to the Question whether Activity can be ascribed to other than Conscious Beings*

Applying these distinctions to the problem whether there are beings other than ourselves to which we have a right to attribute activity, we see at once that if such beings exist, their activity cannot be known to us in the way in which we know our own activity—that is, as a *mode* of experience. But if it is the case that the existence of independent Reals is guaranteed, not as a mode, but as a fact, of experience, it may be that the same thing is true of activity. Such activity would obviously have to be conceived as the activity of other selves or of independently existing objects, and as experienced in the same sense in which the existence of such objects is experienced—that is, as a fact.

In the following chapter we shall proceed to examine the possibilities here suggested. This will involve a complete reconsideration of the whole question of experience, existence and selfhood in the light of the distinction between facts and modes of experience.

## CHAPTER XXII

### EXPERIENCE, EXISTENCE AND SELFHOOD

IN the last chapter I drew attention to a distinction that has become of fundamental importance, the distinction between modes and facts of experience. We must now proceed to apply the distinction to the problem of existence. The final solution to that problem, it will be remembered, was deferred at the end of Chapter XIII until certain epistemological implications, having to do especially with the nature of experience, should have been made clear. We are now in a position to return to the point at which our previous inquiry was broken off.

#### *The Distinction between Modes and Facts of Experience in its Application to the Question of Existence*

Applying the distinction, then, to the question of existence, we must state the matter thus. It is a fact of experience, as we have seen, that phenomena and real objects exist : it is a mode of experience to be conscious of real objects and of phenomena. There is, however, a very marked difference between the experience of phenomena as such and the experience of those real objects, of which phenomena are the appearance ; and it is from this difference that we must now again start.

A strictly empirical interpretation of existence may be stated in the following proposition. The facts of which experience is the guarantee must have something about them which is, so to speak, commensurate with the varying modes under which experience actually occurs. That is to say, the nature and extent of that to which, upon purely empirical grounds, we attribute existence is determined by the experience which we have of the objective contents, whether phenomenal or real, of the world.

Now we have seen that we do not normally have experience of phenomena as such. Rather the experience of phenomena which we undoubtedly have is merely an aspect of a larger experience, which includes their mutual transformability. To say that the experience of phenomena is merely an *aspect* does not however imply that it is merely an *abstraction*. It is so from the standpoint of epistemological significance, but so far as the actualities of experience are concerned, it would be better to describe the difference between an experience of phenomena and an experience of real things as a difference of mode. That is to say, the experience of phenomena, although it is seldom given without something more being given along with it, has nevertheless about it something distinct and individual. It is a separate experience which is at the same time an inseparable part of a larger experience. It is the experience of an evanescent content, which is incidental to the experience of what is not thus evanescent.<sup>1</sup> The differ-

<sup>1</sup> A question which might be raised here is as to the nature of those exceptional experiences in which the presented phenomenon is *not* seen to be the appearance of any real object, but is merely an appearance. The special difficulty is that such detached phenomenal contents might appear to be instances of data in the sense in which I have refused to

ence between the two experiences, which, as has just been stated, is a difference of mode, is reflected in a further difference—that between the *existence* of an appearance and the *existence* of a real object. This is a difference of fact. That is to say, while the existence of appearances is a fact that is guaranteed by experience, it is guaranteed by a different kind of experience from that which guarantees the existence of real objects, and is consequently a *different fact* of experience.

*The Standpoint of Physics ; its Phenomenalist Interpretation of Nature implies an Ultra-phenomenalist Interpretation of the Fact that Nature exists*

What really exists, then, in accordance with the principle stated above, is an entity to which the phenomena in any transformable system may be attributed as its appearances. It will be seen that this conception conforms to the conditions previously laid down for the interpretation of existence itself and of nature—namely, that existence, and nature as a system of existents, must be characterized by a certain permanence. For the entity with which we are here dealing is quite obviously immune from the excessively fluctuating character of its phenomenal manifestations. As was said before, in relation to the latter, it is an invariable. In view, however, of the

admit that data exist. Without attempting an explanation of these cases, I may point out that they do not in any way threaten my view. Thus if ordinary data, that is to say, appearances which are known by experience to be the appearances of real objects, are the products of a successful adjustment, it is natural to suppose that unsuccessful or incomplete adjustment will have its products too, and that among these are to be reckoned floating appearances.

necessarily phenomenalist character of natural knowledge, as embodied in the science of physics, it is necessary that we should take up the inquiry in another way—in fact that we should try to show how, from the standpoint of physics itself, a phenomenalist interpretation of nature implies an ultra-phenomenalist interpretation of the fact that nature exists,

Reverting to our conception of nature as “a system of theoretically simple terms distinguished not by anything in the character of the terms themselves, but by the relations which hold between them”,<sup>1</sup> let us probe the conception a little further. We have seen that the existence of the terms, in this case the *particles*, is a necessary postulate of physics. It is a *postulate* for the obvious reason that the particles, being beyond the limit of discernibility, are not guaranteed by experience in the sense in which the existence of things that can be empirically observed is guaranteed. On the other hand, in so far as physics is an empirical science of nature, the existence of its data must in the end be guaranteed by experience. That is to say, the data are guaranteed by an experience which is not the direct presentation of these data.

*The Existents to which we attribute Appearances  
cannot be Simple*

There is, however, a certain paradox in this. By the theory of relations we are compelled to look upon the units as having no internal character, and as therefore theoretically simple. But simplicity is

<sup>1</sup> Above, pp 204-5.

incompatible with the conditions under which the existence of anything is empirically revealed. For existence is revealed in this case as a fact and not as a mode of experience ; and facts, since they are the contents of judgments, are complex things. Thus what we experience is not ' x-existing ', but *the fact that x exists* ; and such a fact can be experienced only when x reveals itself as a manifold of systematically ordered appearances. These appearances are the appearances which x presents under varying conditions—that is to say, in the varying relationships in which x stands to other existents. But the appearances themselves are not the relations or the conditions. The question what they are is so immensely difficult and complicated that we cannot attempt to answer it here ; but the one truth which it really concerns us to know is easily ascertained. It is identical with the truth that has just been stated as regards the existence of anything which is an object of experience. Wherever, as in the present case, we are entitled to think of a system of appearances as the appearances of *anything*, it follows as a corollary that the reality to which we attribute the appearances cannot be simple. The absolutely simple, if it appears at all, must present one invariable appearance under all circumstances.

This is very obvious in certain kinds of experience. For example, the church tower of our previous illustration could not appear now large, now small, unless it possessed a certain spatial magnitude ; and spatial magnitude implies a complexity of parts. It could not present the appearance of different shapes, when seen from different angles, unless it already contained *some* difference of shape.

There are cases, however, which are not at all so clear as this one—cases in which the variety of appearance seems to be due entirely to the conditions of observation, and not at all to any complexity in the object observed. When we look at an object through differently coloured glasses, we do not ordinarily think of the variety of appearances thus produced as indicating any complexity of colour in the object itself. A moment's consideration, however, will show that this is only to say that the different colours, which in this case are the colours of the glasses and not of the object, do not constitute the special complexity we have in view. The object is not complex in the sense that it is differently coloured. Nevertheless it is a coloured object, and this of itself implies a certain complexity of character. At the very least it must combine the colour qualities which we call hue, illumination and saturation ; and when we consider what colour means, we see that any possible formulation implies a variety of elements ; while any attempt at a complete explanation would involve all the complexity of colour theory.

The same thing is true of the bent appearance which the stick presents when partly immersed in water. It is not that the bent appearance and the straight appearance are components in the complex character of the stick, but that unless the stick were complex in nature, it would not present a variety of appearances under varying conditions. To be capable of presenting one visible appearance is to be capable of presenting others ; and this implies that the various appearances in question bring out certain differences in what it means to be a visible object at all.

*The Complex Existent must be more than merely a 'Term': It must be in some sense a Self*

We shall therefore be compelled to assume the complexity of everything that exists.<sup>1</sup> But when we add the concept of complexity to the concept of existence, the result is something more than a term in a system of relations. A term has no inner nature of its own. A physical particle, except for the fact of its existence, is exhaustively definable by reference to the variable relations in which it stands. In itself it is nothing more than an artifice of thought, the significance of which is to be found in the necessity of supposing that *something exists* of which the equations of physics are true. But to add the further concept is virtually to admit the reality of selves. Such an admission is of course no part of the actual *content* of physical science; but it is an implication of the fact that physical science postulates the existence of that with which it has to do.

We see, then, that the postulates of physics and the theory of relations, which is a generalization of the latter, point beyond themselves to a theory of reality in which the unit of existence is not the physical particle or the term, but the complex self; and if the system of nature is definable as the world of physics, then the actually existing world, which is the system of all selves, must in a sense belong to a supernatural order.

<sup>1</sup> One consequence of what has been said is that there is a fallacy in all attempts to demonstrate the immortality of the soul (that is, its necessary existence) on the ground of its simplicity. If there is any one thing about personality that suggests its survival after death it is the extreme complexity of the elements which it integrates, implying as it does the possibility of indefinite adaptation to change of conditions.

*The Standpoint of Biological Science : Its Existents  
have a Complex Inner Nature*

This is a conclusion to which there would be no theoretical objection were the science of physics the only one concerned in the interpretation of nature. But this is by no means the case. Before our final conclusions can be stated, we must deal with that other view of nature which we have seen to be dominated by the science of biology. The peculiar complication which arises here is due to the fact that, in some of its aspects at least, biology deals with units which are admittedly complex, namely, organic structures, but treats these as units in a natural order. In this it would seem to run counter to the principle of physics, that the units of nature have no nature of their own.

It can hardly be said, then, that the science of biology rests upon the same phenomenalist basis as the science of physics. We have not yet reached the point (if indeed the point will ever be reached) at which living organisms can be treated either as physical units or as systems of such units. On the contrary, the conditions of this science still require that the units be taken in all their complexity as organized wholes. This, however, as has just been remarked, does not imply that the biologist regards his data and the relations which subsist between them as entities of a supernatural order. Such a view is utterly repugnant to him. His position, therefore, involves a departure from the concept of nature as the system of observable phenomena, and a re-definition of the concept in such a way as to include

entities to which we can hardly as yet refrain from attributing some of the definitory characteristics of selfhood. This statement, however, is much too simple and general to express the exact position of biological science, which is neither simple nor unambiguous.

At an earlier point<sup>1</sup> I touched upon some of the differences that mark the attitude of biologists to their subject. To these we must now return for a short space. There are no less than three divergent tendencies at work in biology to-day.

### *The Mechanistic View of the Organism*

There is the tendency to treat the organism as nothing but an exquisitely complex phenomenon of chemical and physical factors. Followed out to its logical conclusions, this line of thought would lead biology back to chemistry and eventually to physics. Such at least would be the ideal goal of the science, and in so far as it must be acknowledged that that goal is not within measurable distance of attainment, the reason would be sought in the extreme complexity of the phenomena involved. In the present state of our knowledge biology would, if this account is correct, define itself against the sciences of inanimate nature only as a complex application of natural law differs from a simple application.

The implications of this doctrine are easily stated. In the first place there is, on this view, no fundamental difference between the animate and the inanimate. Life is a phenomenon of organization, and organization is only a name for the physical at

<sup>1</sup> Above, pp. 173 *sq.*

a high degree of complexity.<sup>1</sup> The conception of organism, which in a generalized form has played such a momentous rôle in idealistic philosophy, and has been so widely interpreted as the antithesis of the mechanical, is really, on this view, only the concept of the mechanical obscured by our inability to follow it out in all its ramifications.

What has been said of life will apply equally to personality in so far as personality falls within the cognizance of the biologist. Just as life in the last analysis reduces to a complex phenomenon of purely physical factors, so personality is analysable into a composite of impersonal factors. It is a phenomenon of life at a certain level of complexity.

But obviously if this is so, if living things and persons are only complex instances of the same things with which physics deals in an ideally simplified form, then we are bound to accept all the implications of such a view, and particularly that phenomenalism which is a theoretical abstract of physics. This phenomenalism will compel us in the end to refuse the character of selfhood and the capacity for activity to living organisms and to persons, and to substitute for these the ideas of composition and motion. This is tantamount to a complete denial of personality.

These conclusions will be disputed by certain biologists, and indeed by certain physicists, who accept the mechanistic interpretation of nature, but would like to rescue some part of the spiritualist view of life. To these thinkers it seems at the same time *necessary* to interpret nature mechanistically,

<sup>1</sup> The complexity in question is of course a complexity of the relations and not of the units.

and *possible* to accept all that life and personality seem to mean and to offer to human beings. Their argument may be summarized somewhat as follows. It is true that life and personality must be explained mechanistically in accordance with the principles which govern the sciences of chemistry and physics. It is true that the difference between a world of living and conscious agents and a world of physical particles is only a difference of degree, that in the one case more equations are required for a complete explanation than in the other. But this does not alter the fact that when the complex conjunctions occur, what is given is life, consciousness, personality. These are what nature *becomes* at a certain level of complexity, and there is no reason why we should not accept them in all the wealth of their spiritual implications, irrespective altogether of how they come to be and what, upon analysis, they really are.

In defining our attitude to this contention we must first take note of a certain ambiguity. What is it that we mean by life, consciousness, personality? Is it something that can be observed as other phenomena can be observed? Is the experience we have of these things the experience which a subject has of its object? If so, it is perfectly legitimate to argue that life, consciousness, etc., are nothing but exceedingly complex facts of nature. In this case, however, it is obvious that these are facts of which we have no direct experience. They are not presented appearances, and they are far too complex for direct observation. If we insist on treating them from this point of view, therefore, we must regard them as ideal amplifications of actually experienced phenomena. To this there can be no theoretical objection, for such is the

normal method of physical science. The only difference would be that in the case of physics the idealization is necessitated by the minuteness of the factors involved, whereas in the present case the necessity arises from the complexity of the product. Life, consciousness, personality are then compositions of physical units at a point of complexity where actual experience cannot follow them, and must consequently be supplemented by a certain amount of justifiable hypothesis. The facts to which we give these names are facts which we cannot observe in their detail but only in mass-effects.

This is a conclusion which should make one pause. But the time to pause is not quite yet. It has already been shown that consciousness is not amenable to interpretation according to the formula of naturalism, either as a term in a relation or as a relation between terms. The formula, as so expressed, however, is the product of extreme simplification, and it still remains to ask whether an immensely complex system of terms and relations cannot be identified with what we call consciousness, and whether this identification cannot be established on the basis of a well-authenticated system of mutually transformable phenomena.

A careful consideration of the question will show that if such is the case, the consciousness which is thus reduced to a tangled complex of objective factors, is still wanting in one of the fundamental characteristics of consciousness, as this is known to us in experience. It is not the consciousness which we experience as what it means to *be conscious* of objects, but the consciousness which we observe as itself *an object*. Now if there is such a thing as consciousness in this latter sense, there is such a thing

as consciousness in the former, and the question of simplicity or complexity can make no difference in this aspect of the case. The conscious experience of an objective world can never be the same thing as the objective content of that experience. And with this conception of consciousness the conception of personality stands or falls. Either there is no such thing as personality, or else to be a person is to have experience of what it means to be conscious. Not that the experience of being conscious is all that is implied in personality ; but without the capacity for such experience one of the defining characteristics of personal existence is wanting. Personality implies more than what it is to *be* an object, no matter how complex. It implies what it is to *have* an object ; and what it is to have an object implies what it is to *be* a subject. Now what it is to be a subject is undoubtedly a content of experience, but it is not an objective, phenomenal content. To whatever extent personal existence is bound up with natural antecedents and concomitants, it is undoubtedly not reducible to these.

There remains the case of life. Now in so far as life does not necessarily imply the consciousness of living, there is no theoretical objection to the naturalistic interpretation ; and there are strong theoretical reasons for precisely this interpretation. On the other hand, where life is actually accompanied by consciousness, as in human beings, the meaning of life is no longer exhaustively expressible as the content of an observed phenomenon. It is the content of an experience, which, like the experience of being conscious, cannot be reduced to purely objective terms. Life as we experience it in ourselves, as what it

means to be alive, is not a phenomenon of nature, but a condition of all the experience that we have of the world, in whatever aspect we regard it.

Thus the attempt to make biology conform to the naturalistic viewpoint of physics is relevant only within the limitations of a phenomenalistic interpretation of life. Beyond this point there are aspects of life that cannot be forced within the framework of any such interpretation. Nevertheless biology has tried to extend the naturalistic explanation of its data to life considered as something more than an appearance or complex of appearances.

*The View, in Naturalistic Terms, of the Organism as a Complex Unit, not resolvable into simple Units; the very significant Changes which it introduces into the Theory of Relations*

This brings us to the second of the three theories to which reference has been made. The starting-point here is the treatment of the organism not as a product or composition of chemical constituents and physical conditions, but as an organic unit. The biologist who adopts this point of view distinguishes himself from the bio-chemist as a 'naturalist'; but it is obvious that his naturalism is of a different order from that which we have been examining. His point of view may be defined by saying that in his investigation of the facts of animated nature, he accepts as the data, beyond which he does not seek to push analysis, the world of organized living structures.<sup>1</sup> The units in this case are individuals in a sense in which the

<sup>1</sup> This point of view is represented by W. E. Ritter: *The Unity of the Organism*.

atoms and electrons of the chemist and the particles of the physicist are not.

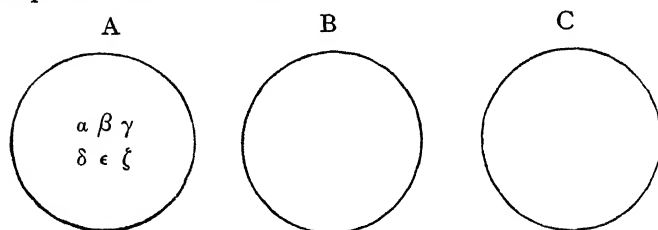
The meaning of this statement may be brought out by drawing attention to certain very significant changes which must now be introduced into the theory of relations, so far as the latter applies to the standpoint of the biological naturalist. That theory, as we have seen, embodies in a general theoretical fashion the hypothesis which determines the procedure in physical science. Now there is one aspect of relations which has not yet been noticed, although it is implied in much that has been said. A relation, as hitherto understood, is definable, in reference to its terms, as the meaning of the preposition 'between'. That is to say, relations hold *between* terms. The assumption upon which this conception rests is, as we have also seen, that terms are simple entities (or at least may be treated as such), and that consequently they have no internal nature—no nature which is not expressed by the enumeration of the external relations in which they stand. It is obvious that these notions are no longer strictly applicable if, with the naturalist, we adopt as our unit a system which is already complex, and the complexity of which we cannot altogether ignore. For it is a fact of experience that such units cannot, or at least do not, pass from one system of relations to another without undergoing certain internal changes, and that these changes must be taken into account in any theoretical description of the total event.

*Here the Existent Unit has been given the Complexity of a Self: Its Relations are 'for' Itself*

Thus the successive relationships through which an organism passes are not a matter of indifference to the organism, as they are to a physical particle. They do not leave the organism what it was, or would have been, had it not passed through the changes in question. When this is the case, it is not enough to define relations as the meaning of the preposition 'between', when applied to unchanging terms. The 'terms' in this case are not unchanging, and therefore, strictly speaking, they are not terms; but—and this is of much greater importance—the relationship does not define itself only as the meaning of the preposition *between*, but also as the meaning of the preposition *for*.

We may state the principle involved as follows. When any one of the factors entering into relationship is itself a complex system, the relationship into which that factor enters exists not only between the various factors in the case, but *for* the factor which is a complex system.

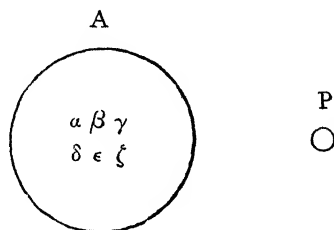
A simple and thoroughly artificial diagram may help to make this clear.



Let A, B and C be units in the system of relations, X; and let A be a complex system including

the elements,  $a\beta\gamma\delta\epsilon\zeta$ , etc. Then in so far as it is not possible for A to pass from the system of relationships X to another system Y without some change in its internal structure as represented by  $a\beta\gamma\delta\epsilon\zeta$ , the relationships in question exist not only between A and other units, but *for* A.

By a still further simplification of the illustration, it is possible to indicate something of the difference that distinguishes relations *between* from relations *for*. Suppose A is nothing more than what it appears to be in the diagram, namely, a system of spatial units, and that  $a\beta\gamma\delta\epsilon\zeta$  are the units of the system. That is to say,  $a\beta\gamma$ , etc., are places or points in A. So far as the illustration goes, it does not greatly matter what we mean by points. The essential feature is that  $a$ ,  $\beta$ ,  $\gamma$ , etc., should be different from one another. If  $a$  is a point, then  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  are other points. And if so much is granted, we shall suppose further that P is a point or a place other than any of the points or places that constitute the system A. We may represent it diagrammatically as situated outside the latter.



Then obviously if  $a\beta\gamma\delta\epsilon\zeta$  are places within the system, and P is a place outside the system, there is a spatial relation  $r$  between  $a$  and P, and another spatial relation  $r'$  between  $\beta$  and P. Similarly for each of the places within the system A there is a relation

to P, which is not identical with the relation between P and any other member of the system.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore no one of these relationships can be described literally as the relationship between A and P. For example, the relationship between P and *a* may be measurable by a line *a*-P along a certain direction ; but there are places in A which are not so measurable. In order to express in an exhaustive fashion the relationship between A and P we should have to enumerate all the relations between P and the elements of A. But no one of these relations is the exact relation between A and P, and we should hardly describe the system of relations which connect A with P as the relation between these two terms. As a matter of fact, for the limited purposes of particular problems it is convenient to consider some one of these relations as the relation in question. If so, however, it is the relation *between* A and P only by courtesy of language. In other words it exists as the relationship between A and P only vicariously or *ideally*. *Literally* it is the relation between P and some member or other of A. As such, it is in position to throw light on the nature of A as a system of elements in space. It contributes to the definition of A some such proposition as this, that A is a system of spatial units of such a sort that between one of its members and P there exists a relationship measurable by the line *a*-P. In this sense

<sup>1</sup> Of course there is a relationship between P and any member of A, which is one and the same whatever member be chosen—in the present instance the relationship described in the words “ to the right ” or “ to the left ”. But in looking at the relationship in this way, we abstract from the relationship in its entirety. For P is not only to the right of every member of A : it is *further* to the right or *less far* to the right as the case may be.

we may say that the relationship  $r$  between  $a$  and  $P$  is not, literally speaking, a relationship *between*  $A$  and  $P$ , but that it is, literally speaking, a relationship *for*  $A$ . This is to say,  $A$  would not be what it is unless the relationship  $r$  actually existed between  $a$  and  $P$ . This means, or may mean, that the relation between  $a$  and  $P$  is a characteristic or state of  $A$ ; or at least that it indicates a certain characteristic or state; and to say that  $A$  has states or characteristics which affect it, not as a simple and undivided unit, but as a complex system, is to say that it has an internal nature. It is more than a term: it is in some sense a self.

Of course this illustration is highly artificial, and if there were no factors involved other than spatial factors, there would be no reason, other than an artificial one, for regarding  $A$  as a system at all. In this case such selfhood as it possessed would be a selfhood imposed upon it by the purpose or convenience of the observer: it would not be a selfhood of its own, and would consequently be no true selfhood. As a matter of fact, outside the science of mathematics we never do find ourselves dealing with systems of this sort. The systems with which in actual experience we are compelled to deal are not combinations which we artificially construct out of certain raw material furnished by the otherwise unordered manifold of appearances.<sup>1</sup> They are systems which we discover.

<sup>1</sup> Of course it may be said that it is specifically the business of the creative artist and the craftsman to construct just such systems. But the products of art and craftsmanship are not arbitrary constructions. They have to take into account the physical possibilities of combination. There is a *natural history* of every art and craft, in which empirical discovery bulks largely.

*The Empirical Basis of the Non-mechanistic View :  
we experience Organisms as Selves*

Now it is the discovery, in experience, of such systems that serves to differentiate the standpoint of the biological naturalist, who treats the organism as a complex unit or integrated system, from that of the physicist or the bio-chemist, who treats it as a subject of analysis, to be resolved into simple units. In physics, as has been pointed out so often, the units are all, theoretically at least, simple ; and the only thing which we can know about them is the external relations in which they stand. It is for this reason, namely, the impossibility of penetrating to the inner nature of that which by definition has no inner nature, that the phenomenalist standpoint is so obviously appropriate in physics. Or, to put the matter otherwise ; the reason why physics has become phenomenalist is to be found in the difficulty of obtaining an experience which implies the selfhood of its units in the same way in which the experience of a transformable series of appearances implies the selfhood of that of which they are the appearances. Similarly the reason why biology—more particularly in this second type of view, which we are now considering—has not become phenomenalist to the same degree, is the difficulty of obtaining an experience in which the associated appearances are not presented as the appearances of a self. The question remains : What is the fundamental characteristic of this experience—the characteristic which renders it impossible for us to have experience of organized bodies without experiencing the *fact* that they are selves ?

Some light may be thrown upon the question by drawing attention to the nature of organisms as revealed in their relations to their environment. It is a noteworthy fact that the conception of an environment is one which we usually apply only in the case of living things ; and when we extend the conception to the physical in general, we feel that it is applied in a quasi-metaphorical sense. It might even be said that the organic defines itself in contradistinction to the purely physical as that which has an environment. Obviously then an environment is not identical with the sum-total of physical—that is, spatio-temporal—relations in which any thing stands. For every actually existing content of space and time, every unit of physical science, there must exist a system of relations connecting that unit with every other. A human body, for example, existing at a particular moment of time and in a particular place, is related spatially to the remotest star, as yet undiscovered, and temporally to every event past, present and future in the history of the universe. Yet we do not consider all these relations as entering into or constituting the environment of the body. Against this system of universal relations the environment marks itself off as a minor system. It might be defined as the system of relations that exist *for* the organism, and not merely *between* it and other things, or as the system of relations into which the organism enters as a differentiated unity, rather than as a simple unit ; and the significant fact is that the range of such relations which exist for any organized system is not indefinite.

Thus there are two sets of relationships into which such a system may enter. There are the relations

which, so far at least as their immediate effects upon the system are concerned, make no difference whatever. They are the relations which, when they occur, are not accompanied by internal changes in the condition of the organism. They are purely external relations subsisting between the organism and the outer world, and so far as we confine our attention to them, the organism may be considered a simple unit, a structureless term, the content of a point in space or a spatio-temporal volume. In this way the organic is amenable to treatment from the standpoint of the purely physical. On the other hand there are relationships into which the organism cannot enter except in a certain state, a state which differentiates itself from other states, actual and possible. These relationships, so far from compelling us to look upon the living thing as a simple unit, compel us to recognize it as a complex and variable structure. In this way we discriminate between the physical and the biological point of view. The biological is that which compels us to treat the units in a system of relations as structural, and, incidentally, as functional complexes ; whereas the physical is that which does not permit us to treat any unit as other than simple.

It is easy to see how the question of existence is bound up with these distinctions. Physically speaking, relations have nothing whatever to do with the existence of anything. They merely serve to define the character of the existent. The *existence* of the latter, as we have noticed, is a postulate. This may be expressed in two ways. Either (1) we may say : Granted the existence of *something* in space and time, our problem is to discover the spatio-temporal relations in which it stands ; or else (2) we may say :

Having discovered systems of relations by such processes of inquiry as constitute the content of physical science, we are bound to presuppose that something exists of which these relations hold good. When, however, a system of relations constitutes an environment, we must express the situation quite otherwise by asserting that but for these relations the entities in question would not exist. This is no more than an empirically ascertainable fact; and the specific nature of the relations in question is a thing which must also be ascertained empirically.

Here then we have a partial answer to the question which was put some time ago, why we cannot have experience of organisms without experiencing the fact that they are selves. (1) Our experience of the relations in which they stand reveals the fact that they cannot exist outside of these relations. (2) This in turn implies that we experience them as complex units having states. (3) To have states without ceasing to be a unit is to have an inner nature which is variable within limits; and (4) this is, among other things, what it means to be a self.

*The Grounds of the Distinction between Nature in its Phenomenalist Aspect and in its Aspect as a System of Selves*

Thus what was previously said about complexity as a condition of existence receives confirmation. It should be further observed that when we think of an organism in relation to its environment, we think of that relationship primarily from the spatial point of view. Something analogous will be found to hold good when we consider the subject primarily from

the standpoint of the time-factor. In physics antecedent conditions may be looked upon as productive of subsequent conditions, but not as producing the terms which we suppose to exist under these conditions. In biology it is otherwise. Organisms come into existence and continue to exist as a result of reproductive and other processes. That is to say, existence is not merely added to these processes, but is given as a fact in the same complex of experience which gives us a knowledge of the processes themselves. Moreover as in the case of the simultaneous relations which constitute an environment, so in the case of related temporal events, not all antecedents in the time series contribute constitutive conditions. For every individual and every natural kind there are well-defined sequences of events which alone are immediately relevant. These are indicated by all that we have discovered about the processes whereby life originates and propagates itself, and are summarized in such general conceptions as reproduction, growth and evolution.

From these observations certain reflections arise as to the conditions under which nature inevitably assumes the phenomenalist aspect of a system of externally related contents on the one hand, and the aspect of a system of selves on the other. The phenomenism that goes with physics goes also with those forms of experience in which a knowledge of relations, so to speak, outruns our ability to discover what it is that sustains these relations—that is to say, what it is *in itself* and apart from the fringe of enveloping circumstance, *i.e.* the facts *about it*. That such is the case with regard to some of our knowledge has already been pointed out. It is this noteworthy

feature of knowledge, this inequality in what we might call the epistemological penetrability of the real, that is at the bottom of the mechanistic view of nature. The typical situation is that in which the actually existing content of the spatio-temporal system is, physically considered, incommensurate with the magnitude of the spatio-temporal system itself, in which it is observed or assumed to exist. When this situation arises, the spatio-temporal relations are everything, and the units between which they hold may, for all practical purposes, be treated as dimensionless simples, to be defined exclusively in terms of the equations which express the relationships in which they stand.

Such is the case in the closely related sciences of physics and astronomy, as well as in that part of chemistry which deals with the structure of the atom, and which comes nearest to physics. In this connection the remarkable analogies that have lately been discovered between chemistry and astronomy are highly instructive. It is usual to look upon these analogies chiefly from the standpoint of chemistry. The striking fact which has emerged is the planetary arrangement of the electrons in the structure of the atom.<sup>1</sup> But the procedure may be reversed if we consider that for certain purposes of astronomy it is natural to treat the units of the celestial system, vast and complex as they are, in much the same way as physical chemistry treats the electrons—that is, as simple units in a relational system. There are astronomical truths that depend on our ability to consider the stars as such units, and to concentrate our atten-

<sup>1</sup> [This passage, like some others, dates itself as belonging to the author's first draft of these *Studies*.]

tion exclusively upon the variable external relations that constitute their movements in space. That we are able to do so without falsifying the results is due to the fact that in proportion to the extent of the intersidereal spaces the magnitude of the stars is in the instances referred to negligible. This phase of astronomical science is dominated by the practical incommensurability of the system of units and the units in the system. In the case of biology there is no such incommensurability between the factors involved ; and so it is that the idea of a system of relations becomes the idea of an environment.

*Why Biology must none the less remain Naturalistic  
in Method and Standpoint*

Now it is clear that if we define nature as the subject-matter of physics, we have no right to extend the term to the realm of organisms considered as such, that is, from the standpoint of the naturalist; nor have we any right to include biological science, understood in this sense, along with physics, under the common rubric of natural knowledge. Yet there is one impelling reason why we should extend these terms to the province of biology. Admitting that organisms are not terms in a system of relations, admitting that we treat them as in some sense selves, we none the less insist that they be regarded not from the standpoint of what they are in themselves, but from the standpoint of how they come to be what they are. We treat them as the product of evolution and of their environment. The relationships which exist for them, although integrated with them, in a way in which terms and relations are not integrated,

are nevertheless prior in the order of our knowledge to the organisms themselves. In a word, we explain the existence of organic things by reference to evolution and environment, and not evolution and environment by reference to their 'products'.

*The Vitalist, Non-naturalistic, View of the  
Organism*

The third tendency in biology, vitalism, is more definitely philosophical than either of the others. It has to do less with the accumulation of biological facts, and more with the interpretation of life. In its more speculative form, for example in the work of M. Bergson, it goes even further than this. It attempts to deal with the question as to what light is thrown upon the nature of reality as a whole by the fact that life exists. With vitalism in its more narrowly biological applications I shall not attempt to deal. The problem is partly a methodological one; and it is for the biologist to decide whether the interests of his science are better served by a mechanistic or a vitalistic hypothesis. It will be enough for our present purposes to point out that vitalism implies a change of standpoint very closely akin to that implied in the twofold character of experience as what it means to have an object and what it means to be a subject. If so, it is possible that life may be interpretable in both senses. The question is: What do we have in the way of actual experience corresponding to what we call life?

*Life as an observable Phenomenon of Nature*

In answer to the question it may be said : We experience living things around us as *observable* phenomena of nature ; and in so far as this is so, it is legitimate and necessary to investigate life from a phenomenalist or quasi-phenomenalist and mechanistic point of view. Life in this sense is literally an observable phenomenon or succession of phenomena ; and as such, it reveals itself under the specific limitations of phenomenalism. It does not permit us to say what it is, except in terms of the appearances which it presents, and whatever is implied in the fact of their transformability. This latter fact, however, is of peculiar significance in the case of living things.

In all other instances the transformable appearances are functions of the varying conditions of observation. It is not so here. In the very act of observing the changing appearances of living things we observe also the fact that they go on independently of the conditions under which they are observed by us. The varying appearances presented by a frog, as it passes from the tadpole stage to the fully developed specimen, belong to a different order of observed phenomena from the varying appearances of a church tower. In the case of the tower we experience the fact that a system of appearances may vary without an equivalent variation in anything beyond the appearances themselves and their immediate conditions. By reversing the conditions under which they vary, we can restore previous configurations at will. This is not possible in the other

case. The fact which we now observe is the fact that under any conditions of possible observation a series of appearances will occur in a given order. The difference between the two cases may therefore be stated as follows. In the former instance the unity and identity of the object defines itself in our experience as a reversible series of appearances, in the latter instance, as a series which is well defined but irreversible.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The significance here attached to the distinction between reversible and irreversible series of appearances will recall the very different use made of a similar distinction by Kant in the "Analogies of Experience". Kant there attempts to establish the validity of the concept of causality by drawing attention to the irreversibility of the sequent impressions (*Wahrnehmungen*) which constitute the totality of an event; and in this connection he contrasts the irreversibility of the impressions in question with the reversibility of the appearances which we synthesize in the perception of an object such as a house. It has been repeatedly pointed out, for example by Schopenhauer and by Professor Robert Adamson in his early book on Kant, that in so far as the latter series of appearances occurs in accordance with causal law just as much as the former, the question of reversibility is not strictly relevant. As a matter of fact the distinction is a perfectly real one. For while in both illustrations an event is involved, it is only in one case that Kant is thinking of it as an event: in the other case what he is thinking of is an *object* and the way in which our experience of objects differentiates itself from our experience of events. The reversible impressions which constitute the total phenomenon called a house are precisely what I have designated appearances, and Kant calls them by the same name—*Erscheinungen*. The object known by means of the latter is, however, on my view, *real*; in Kant's view it is phenomenal. In the present passage he calls it too an *Erscheinung*, but to be more exact he should have said a 'Phenomenon' (*vide* Kemp Smith, *A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 83). My point of view here is entirely different. It is that of determining the characteristic marks which distinguish, not our experience of an object from our experience of an event, but our experience of one kind of object from our experience of another—the difference being that in the one case the appearances vary as the conditions of observation vary, and must therefore be considered functions of the conditions, while in the other the appearances which are found to vary also under uniform conditions, must be considered functions of the real object.

The appearances which constitute the latter series are experienced in a different way from that in which the former are experienced. We experience not only the fact that the appearances have changed, but the fact that the object of which they are the appearances has changed with them. And there we find the crux of the whole question. What does it mean to say that we experience a change in the real object as such? It means that we have empirical evidence of the fact that we are unable to attribute two successive complexes of appearance to an object  $x$  without at the same time attributing to the object, as part of its nature, the transition from the one set of appearances to the other. In other words, the observed changes are attributable to the object *as its changes* in the same sense as that in which the individual appearances are attributable to it *as its appearances*. The real object, therefore, defines itself not merely as the objective equivalent of the empirically ascertainable transformability of its appearances, but as the objective equivalent of the fact that certain of these appearances occur in irreversible series.

As regards the latter, it should be noted that there is a sense in which they are the transformations of one another, and a sense in which they are not. They are not mutually equivalent in the sense that one set of appearances is what another becomes when the conditions of observation are altered: they are mutually equivalent in the sense that the later appearances are what the earlier can be relied upon to become under a set of objective conditions, of which the lapse of time is the most fundamental, because it is presupposed in all others.

*Life as the Actual Experience of being Alive : i.e.  
not as a Fact but as a Mode of Experience*

I have, however, indicated only one of the possibilities implied in an experience of life. For life occurs not only as an observable phenomenon of nature : it occurs as the actual experience of being alive. Life in this sense is therefore the content of an experience which is not the experience of having an object. It is, no less than existence itself, given to experience, not as a fact, but as a *mode*. It is existence in a form which compels us doubly to reverse the Berkeleian maxim, and to substitute for the proposition : "*esse* is *percipi*" the proposition "*percipere* is *esse*". Only, the verb *percipere* is hardly adequate to the meaning ; for what we perceive is usually a presented object, and in this instance, as we have seen, there is no object presented.

*Objections to the View that there is Actual  
Modal Experience of being Alive*

This statement, although it is nothing but a transcript of actual experience, is undoubtedly open to certain formal objections. It may even be questioned whether there is such a thing as the experience of being alive ; and the question might be sustained by such an argument as this. To be alive, it might be said, is a perfectly meaningless conception except in a sense which implies two antithetical states, for example, life and death.<sup>1</sup> Of these states

<sup>1</sup> It will be remembered that we dealt (vol. I, p. 162 *sq.*) with a somewhat similar difficulty in the discussion on animism. There is,

we have experience in the phenomenal world of nature. We have observed living things, and we have observed dead things; and the difference between the living and the dead is likewise a matter of observation. But in any other sense than this we know nothing of what it is to be dead. The supposed experience of what it is to be alive is therefore wanting in a correlate which is necessary to give it any real meaning.

It may be further objected that the experience of being alive, if it means anything at all, means neither more nor less than the experience of being conscious. But obviously consciousness is not co-terminous with life. To define life, therefore, in terms which would reduce it to a state of consciousness is, it may be contended, to falsify the facts of the case; it is only as an observable phenomenon, not as a mode of experience, that life admits of being known.

*The Force of the Objections : the Need for defining more precisely the Character of Modal Experience*

The precise force of these criticisms can be made apparent only by a further analysis. That consciousness actually occurs, that there is such a thing as experiencing what it is to be conscious, I shall assume. Further I shall assume that the experience of being conscious, which, as we have seen, is always more than the experience of having an object, is the experience of what it means to exist. So far at least

however, a difference between the two cases. In the earlier argument we had not yet attained the twofold view of life as an observed object and an actual experience.

as our conscious states are concerned, existence is given as a mode of experience. It is when we come to unconsciousness that difficulties arise.

That we are sometimes unconscious we know. Yet we do not think of ourselves as ceasing to exist in our unconscious states. We have also excellent reasons for supposing that other things exist which are never conscious at all. From all of which it follows that consciousness does not coincide with life, nor life with existence; and there remains the empirically guaranteed fact that when existence coincides with consciousness, life is present. As for the *nature* of the life in question, there is, it may be argued, nothing to be learned about it by actually experiencing what it is to be alive; and we are therefore forced back, for our interpretation, upon such facts as biology can discover from observation of the phenomena.

There is much truth in this, and the truth might be conclusive against the view we are here advocating, were it not that the objection takes no account of certain features in experience which we have seen to be fundamental. Just as at the phenomenal level of the subject-object relationship, the nature of experience is not fully revealed if we think of it as nothing but the contemplation of an object by a subject, so the experience of existing, or of being alive, is not fully expressed by the experience of being conscious. In the one case the transformability of the phenomenal content is an integral part of the experience itself; and in the other the experience of existing just as certainly includes a consciousness of the fact that we are not always conscious. In view of this we must restate with

greater precision what was previously said about existence being given as a *mode* of experience.

*Unconscious States can be given as a Mode  
of Experience*

The restatement requires the utmost caution. At first sight it might appear as if we should have to say that the experience of unconscious states, as this is given to us, is given not as a mode but as a fact. But if we say so, we must remember that the self's experience of its own conscious states is not on all fours with its experience of other selves, whether in the conscious or the unconscious state—in a word, with its experience that other selves exist. The existence of the latter, so far as the inwardness of *their* experience is concerned, must always be a fact, and can never be a mode, of our own experience. This is perfectly clear; but it is by no means so clear, in view of all that has been said as to the possibility of unconscious experience, that our existence during states of unconsciousness is not a mode *as well as* a fact of our experience. Let us see whether, by stating exhaustively what appears to be beyond dispute, we can reduce what is really problematical to a minimum. In this way we may hope to localize the problem and so render it more amenable to solution.

The following propositions will hardly be questioned. (1) The experience of being conscious is strictly a mode of experience. (2) The truth of this statement is not contingent upon the degree of consciousness involved. When by a gradual raising of the threshold we pass by imperceptible degrees from

a high to a low degree of consciousness, so long as any vestige of awareness remains, the content of the experience is given as a mode. (3) It is very hard to indicate the point (if indeed there is any such) at which consciousness passes definitely into the unconscious. (4) In dealing with all questions involving the limits of our own consciousness, we are at a certain disadvantage, owing to the fact that we cannot accompany such states with the appropriate observation and mental comment except retrospectively and, so to speak, at a distance. Of course all introspection is to some degree retrospective; but the introspection which accompanies a relatively high degree of consciousness is more closely integrated with our mental state for the time being than the introspection which reaches desperately after the residue of consciousness at the vanishing point. It is this fact, the extent of the difference between *being just conscious* and *attending to* our just-conscious states, that gives those states an appearance of remoteness and externality. What we know of them in this way we know as matter of fact rather than as a mode of experience. That is to say, we know such states of our consciousness as objects to which we are compelled to attribute (a past) existence, and so far our point of view is that of naturalism. None the less we cannot know these states of consciousness—or indeed any other such states—in this fashion, unless we already know them as modes. Experience in the form of introspection and retrospection implies experience in the other sense; and this, as we have indicated, applies right down to the lower limit of consciousness. So long, therefore, as consciousness persists, so long as we are *all but* unconscious, we

have two keys to what 'conscious' means—the key of observation and the key of that direct experience which precedes observation.

Our problem narrows down to this. Granted (1) that states of complete unconsciousness occur, (2) that we pass gradually<sup>1</sup> into and out of such states, and (3) that, however small the degree of consciousness, it is given to us as a mode and not merely as a fact of experience—can we say that states of complete unconsciousness are given only as facts and not at all as modes? There are really two questions here. (1) As we pass from a minimal consciousness to complete unconsciousness, how is the experience given? And (2) how is it given when the process is reversed?

### *Transition from Unconsciousness to Consciousness*

To take the second question first. When, after a deep and dreamless sleep, the first faint vestiges of consciousness appear, is the experience correctly described by saying that we experience a faint consciousness, *plus* the *fact* that we have been unconscious? Must we not add that we actually *experience* the transition from unconsciousness to the first faint vestiges of awareness?<sup>2</sup> But if so, is it possible to experience a transition without experiencing each of the steps in the process, of which, in this instance, unconsciousness is one? In other words, does not the experience of transition in this case imply that it

<sup>1</sup> The word 'gradually' must not of course be taken to mean that the process is *slow*.

<sup>2</sup> The question whether the transition is smooth and continuous or by abrupt, though minute, increments does not seem to have any special bearing upon the case.

is possible to experience what it is to be unconscious, just as it is possible to experience what it is to be conscious? Let us consider what the actual experience of being unconscious would mean.

Obviously there can be no such thing as a contemporaneous consciousness of being unconscious; and a consciousness of having been unconscious would commonly be given as a fact rather than as a mode of experience. But there is a difference between a consciousness of having been unconscious and a consciousness of having been unconscious *the moment before*. Indeed in the latter case the degree of consciousness involved is so slight that it is questionable whether we are justified in attributing to it the usual analytic distinction of state and content; and to say that we are aware of having been unconscious implies some such distinction. To experience anything as a fact is to assign a fairly well articulated objective content to the experience in question. But the experience with which we are dealing is characterized by the absence of any such clearness of articulation. The whole question turns upon the nature of the transition at this level of experience. We are here dealing with a state of affairs in which it is impossible to distinguish between a change of state and a state of change. The change in question has to do with experience. In so far as the experience is one of transition, this means that it is an experience of change, where experience of change is identical with change of experience. But change of experience implies a differentiation of mode. Now the specific difference in this limiting instance is that between being conscious and being unconscious; and if the former is a mode of experience, the latter must be so also.

*The Unity of the Self is sustained alike by our  
Conscious and by our Unconscious States*

We conclude, therefore, that unconsciousness is a mode of experience when the experience in question is that of a transition from unconsciousness to consciousness,<sup>1</sup> and that the experience of being unconscious is the *starting-point* in that *change of experience* which, in this particular instance, is implied in the experience of change.

The above argument may appear to carry the art of hair-splitting to the point of absurdity ; but a moment's thought should show that such fine-spun distinctions are really implied in all our thinking about ourselves in the opposite states of waking and sleeping. It goes without saying that we do not think of ourselves as annihilated every time we fall into a dreamless sleep. The thread of identity runs continuously through these periodic oppositions of nature. The logic of this fact (or, shall we say, assumption ?) is worthy of attention. Upon what basis does our irresistible impression of self-identity rest ? Upon what basis could it possibly rest but one of experience ? It is a certain unity and continuity of experience—an *identity* of experience—which guarantees to us the unity and continuity of our

<sup>1</sup> We have here an instance of the principle stated by Dr. Whitehead in the passage already quoted (p. 201) from his *Principles of Natural Knowledge*, p. 2. Indeed the principle is more obviously applicable here where we are dealing with actual experience than it is where we are dealing with purely physical change. In the latter case what we have is an objective content of experience—a fact of experience rather than an experience of fact ; and it is at least questionable whether the distinction of past, present and future (rather than the distinction of before and after) is relevant to the time of physics. The former distinction is assuredly characteristic of the time of experience.

selfhood. But in saying so we must remember the double aspect of experience, the aspect in which it gives a phenomenal world of objects to a conscious subject, and that in which it gives a conscious subject along with the phenomenal manifold. Now undoubtedly the observed regularity of nature, considered as a system of appearances, with equivalent Reals, has much to do with creating and sustaining the sense of selfhood in conscious beings, and in our waking experience we lean heavily upon the phenomenal equivalent of selfhood experience. But if this were all we had to go upon, it is rather unlikely that our sense of selfhood—that sense of the inviolable integrity of our personal identity—would be the deeply-rooted thing it is. If the onus of the argument rested entirely upon what experience has to tell us about phenomena, what could be the source of that ineradicable propensity to look down upon phenomena from a standpoint to which we do not permit them any access, or of our ability to discriminate between them, and to brand even the most approved as *mere* appearances? Assuredly we do not rest our claim to selfhood exclusively upon the phenomenal aspect of nature. And if we do not, we tacitly acknowledge an extra-phenomenal range of experience. It is upon this, in the last resort, that our knowledge of what it is to exist and be a self depends; and once this is granted, the world of phenomena is seen to acquire a new significance and a new function in the economy of human life. It becomes, as I have said, a *phenomenal equivalent*—a vast system of signs directing us about the world in our numberless contacts with other selves, but in itself unable to unlock the secret door that leads to

the inner nature and the inner experience of any self whatever. And were it not that the two orders of experience meet in ourselves, we should never be able to read the one in the symbolism of the other.<sup>1</sup>

Now the most striking fact about the unconscious states of living things is the apparently total intermission of the phenomenal equivalent. Unconsciousness, whatever else it may be, is specifically an unconsciousness of appearances; but there can be no doubt that in becoming unconscious of appearances we lose consciousness altogether. That is to say, we lose hold of the thing that is our normal guarantee of selfhood. None the less we do not ordinarily lose it immediately or completely. We are conscious after we have ceased to be aware of objects; and even after complete unconsciousness has supervened, the return to the conscious state brings with it a sense that the oblivion to all things without and within is an experience through which we have passed with no loss of self-identity or existence.

*The Reverse Transition, from Consciousness  
to Unconsciousness*

It remains to look at the fact of unconsciousness from the other point of view—the point of view implied in passing from a state of full awareness into a dreamless sleep. Can it be said that the transition

<sup>1</sup> It should be observed that a very important distinction has crept into the argument—the distinction between selfhood as defined in terms of objective reality and selfhood as defined in terms of inner experience—the experience of what it is to be a subject. In view of this distinction, the word ‘phenomenal’ has been used as applying not merely to appearances as such but to the objective, as opposed to the subjective, aspect of experience.

in this case involves an actual experience of being unconscious ?

There can be no doubt that the reversal in the order of events brings with it a profound difference in the possibilities of interpretation. We were able in the previous case to describe the transition from unconsciousness to consciousness as involving an experience of the former, because of the close integration between the unconscious state and a state of growing awareness. But the integration is here effected within the element of consciousness. It is a case of the past reappearing as an element in the present. But in the instance now before us the experience of being unconscious cannot appear as a residual trace in conscious experience. Consciousness has now disappeared altogether, and is therefore unable to sustain the meaning of what it is to be without itself. There are, however, certain features in the situation that have still to be acknowledged before we can hope for a conclusive answer to our question. In so far as the unconsciousness in question is the product or limit of a transition from full awareness, and in so far as this transition is a mode of actual experience, there must be a sense in which the conscious subject not merely anticipates the fact that an unconscious state is about to occur, but actually feels it approaching, and therefore realizes something of what it means to be in an unconscious state.

Again the fact that the unconscious state is one into which and out of which (after an interval) we pass and repass is not without its bearing on the question. A period of unconsciousness interpolated between two periods of conscious experience in ways

that indicate a certain continuity between the two opposing states, is not like a state of permanent unconsciousness. Just as, within the limits of consciousness, the concept of experience is not definable by reference to a static moment in which the subject contemplates his object, but must include the transition from one conscious state to another, so when conscious states alternate with unconscious, we must find a place for both within the totality of experience.

*Life as an Actual Mode of Experience is what is  
Common to the two Types of Alternating States*

Returning now to the interpretation of life not as an observable phenomenon of nature (life in the biological sense), but as an actual mode of experience (life in the sense of what it means to be alive), we see that there is a very real distinction, as well as a very close connection, between the experience of being conscious and the experience of being alive. Life in this sense defines itself as the experienced continuity of being which underlies the difference between the experience of being conscious and the experience of being unconscious. It is what is common to both experiences, what remains of actual experience when we abstract the difference between the two types of alternating states. Yet it must not be thought of as a mere abstraction. Rather it is what we actually experience as the ability to pass from one state to the other and back again. Life is *an added element* of connotation in the experience of being conscious. It is what enables us to realize our unconscious states as experience. We feel it both in the power we have to resist the incursions of the sleep that overcomes

consciousness and in the confidence with which we normally resign ourselves to them. It meets us as a renewed assurance of existence, when the sleeping state gives place to the waking.

*The Religious Attitude to the Two States*

Furthermore the experience of being alive differentiates itself in its relations to the two opposing experiences of being conscious and being unconscious. The former is its direct guarantee: the latter guarantees it only because the periodic intermission of consciousness can be regarded as a natural rhythm in the experience which includes our conscious states. Hence it is that the transitions from waking to sleeping and from sleeping to waking are fraught with peculiar significance in the experience of life. The sense of what it is to be alive acquires a special piquancy where human experience passes from one of its supreme phases to the other.

I have already dwelt upon the part played by the transition from the dream-experience to waking experience—what I called the intussusception of the two experiences—in developing the primitive man's conception of soul.<sup>1</sup> But apart altogether from dreams there is something in the changes of waking and sleeping that contributes universally to the experience of living. It is for this reason among others that morning and evening are the times peculiarly suited to religious devotion. They are the times at which other preoccupations are apt to be in abeyance, and that peculiar preoccupation with life itself, which we have seen to be the essence of religion, assumes an

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, p. 141.

unwonted depth of solemn meaning. The recovery of consciousness after sleep appears as the recovery of something needed for the continued experience of living ; and the passage to sleep brings with it a sense of solemnly committing our sacred treasure, life, to the hazards of the unconscious state. At such moments we feel our human helplessness, our dependence upon powers beyond our own. Hence the idea of God as the sleepless watcher over sleeping life—the keeper of Israel who neither slumbers nor sleeps.<sup>1</sup> To commit the soul to His care at night is therefore one of the natural offices of religion. “ I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep : for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.”<sup>2</sup>

Hardly less inevitable for the religious consciousness is the immediate sense of a protecting Providence felt upon awakening—the sense of what it is to be still alive connecting irresistibly with the thought of God’s prevailing presence. “ When I awake, I am still with thee.”<sup>3</sup>

In its reflective attitude to the experience of life, the religious mind does not, however, invariably discriminate in favour of the waking state and against the sleeping. The sleeping state, as well as the waking, is a function of life itself, and sleep is a divine gift to God’s beloved.<sup>4</sup> There is indeed a point of view from which the meaning of life is best revealed in the unconscious. For in so far as living things persist alike in both states, the elements which the experience of consciousness adds to the experience of life may be looked upon as an irrelevant and even a disturbing accretion. Life is more than consciousness

<sup>1</sup> Psalm cxxi, 3-4.<sup>2</sup> Psalm iv, 8.<sup>3</sup> Psalm cxxxix, 18.<sup>4</sup> Psalm cxxvii, 2.

and it is capable of subsisting upon less. The *prâṇa* (the living being) is the real self of the *pragñâ* (the self as conscious).

This view must be estimated in the light of our conclusions as to the relation of mysticism to religion. In so far as we have been compelled to reject a specifically mystical experience, at least in its extreme form, we cannot accept an experience of life from which the state of consciousness is permanently banished. On the other hand we have acknowledged a mystical side to all experience—that side in which experience is always more than the consciousness of objects. It is this aspect of the case which enables us to view the experience of life as sustained alike by our conscious and our unconscious states ; but, as we have seen, the whole logic of the argument depends upon the fact that unconscious states can be regarded as a mode of experience only in so far as they are correlated with the experience of consciousness.

*Whether there is still a Sense in which Experience  
should be ascribed to Inanimate Things*

The sole remaining problem is one which has been postponed from an earlier discussion—the problem, namely, whether, as has been suggested, we are entitled to apply the conception of experience to the states of the permanently unconscious. It might seem as if the answer had already been given in the rejection of mystical experience, which is experience from which the element of consciousness, as ordinarily understood, is absent. But, as was indicated when this subject was under discussion, the question must be re-opened in view of our later analysis of

experience. What we have still to do is to ask whether, in the light of all we have learned about experience, there is not a sense in which experience may still be ascribed to inanimate things, the objects of physical science.

The question is to some extent no doubt a verbal one—a question of emphasis and definition. If by experience we mean that which reveals itself as the actuality or possibility of consciousness, then we are obviously not entitled to attribute experience to the inanimate. If on the other hand, in view of the interrupted character of consciousness in the experience of conscious beings, we lay the stress not on the quality of the conscious state as such, but on the fact that it is a state of the self, then it may be that in so far as we think ourselves entitled to attribute selfhood, and the variable states that go with selfhood, to unconscious things, the chemical and organic changes, the tropisms, etc., of nature should be looked upon as the experiences of the unconscious.

The considerations which will weigh most in the solution of this problem are calculated to bring out clearly the principles that must underlie any attempt to define experience adequately. In the first place it must be admitted that every experience is a state of a self. We can hardly attribute experience to what is no more than an appearance. Now looking at the matter empirically, we find that there is one great class of selves, namely, human beings, whose states constantly assume the form of an awareness of facts and objects. The awareness of facts and objects may therefore be considered as a class of experiences. As we have seen, experiences of this kind always involve more than a relationship

between an object and a subject. Or rather, the relationship between an object and a subject implies more than can be adequately expressed as a mere relationship. None the less the relationship exists and is the differentia of one great group of experiences. Now it is obvious that the subject-object relationship must be absolutely excluded from the possible experience of permanently unconscious beings. In these experiences there can be no such thing as an object. And what is of equal importance, there can be in these experiences no such thing as a *fact* of experience. For facts, as has been remarked, are the objective contents of judgments. In so far, then, as facts of experience exist, they exist as elements in the experience of conscious and not of unconscious beings. On the other hand facts exist independently of the experience we have of them. That they are the contents of judgments does not necessarily affect them in any way, although it is as the contents of judgments that we look upon them as *facts*. Whether or not they become the objects of an experience is therefore a matter of indifference, so far as their actual occurrence is concerned. Further it is clear that unconscious selves enter into the situations that we call facts and events. Events happen to such selves without their having any experience *of the fact*. If then we are justified in attributing experience to the unconscious, it cannot be in the form of the experience of fact, but only in the form of modes of experience.

The question, therefore, comes to this : Can we consider the facts or events that happen to unconscious selves as the modes of their experience ?

Reverting once more to the type of experience of which we have the greatest empirical knowledge, our

own, we find that so far as this type is concerned, the modes are constantly dependent upon the facts, in the sense that they are our experience of the facts. To have experience of fact is a mode of experience, and although the modes of experience are not limited to the experience of facts, it is none the less certain that the modes would be severely restricted but for the facts which are their occasion.

There would seem, therefore, in the only case of which we have direct empirical information, to be a certain relationship of dependence, a certain rough commensurateness, between the two aspects of experience—experience as fact and experience as mode; and this renders it impossible to attribute modes of experience to the permanently unconscious.

*The difference between the Relation of a Subject to Objects and its Relation to Other Subjects ; the confounding of the two Relations at the bottom of every Error in Religious Thinking and in the Religious Life*

As was said a moment ago, the question is to some extent one of definition ; but it is not entirely so. There is a practical issue involved—an issue which from the standpoint of religion is of vital moment. The question has to do with our practical attitude to the system of inanimate nature. If that system, as we have seen reason for believing, is more than a system of appearances, is in fact a system of selves, a serious problem of adjustment arises—the problem whether we shall address ourselves to its appearances, or to the entities of which the latter are the outward manifestation. There is only one clue to

a solution. If the selves that constitute the system of nature are, like us their observers, experience-bearing selves, then their experience is bound to be included among the considerations that govern our relations with them. Such is actually the case with those forms of animal life in which the evidence of an experience is unmistakable. Towards the dumb animals a moral man conducts himself in a way that shows at least a certain consideration for what he supposes to be their experience. This experience we interpret by sympathetic insight on the analogy of our own, making deductions by the aid of observation. In the case of inanimate nature we are compelled to fall back exclusively upon observation; and observation gives us no inkling of an inner experience to which we can adjust ourselves as in the former case. If we insist, therefore, on treating nature as, so to speak, a system of experience-bearing selves, we can do so only by projecting our experience into it by an unrestrained act of the imagination.

There is here a danger which is not present in our relations with living things. The latter to some extent co-operate with us in the interpretation of their experience. Their attitudes and reactions at once suggest the limitations of their inner life, and inhibit the extravagances of our sympathetic fancy. There is no such check upon us when it comes to dealing with inanimate nature. This fact is at the bottom of the danger just referred to. In attributing to our fellow men an inner life of experience similar to our own, we do not ordinarily magnify them as greater than ourselves. If we do so, it is because we attribute to them types of experience which are not common, but are beyond the range of ordinary

mortals. An insistence on the *common* character of experience is the best antidote to the apotheosis of human beings. But it is one thing to assign the attributes that depend on a capacity of human experience to our fellows, and another to assign them to what we ordinarily call nature. A man is never more than a man ; but a mountain that can hear prayers, or a river that can be propitiated by gifts is a god.

As we have seen, a great part of the history of religion consists of such confusions. These go back to a false interpretation of our own experience of life and the world which results from the failure to discriminate between what it tells us as to the relations of a subject to his object and what it tells us as to the relation of the subject to other subjects. In the world of our experience we find that we must constantly relate ourselves to other selves ; but it makes all the difference whether we relate ourselves to them as subject to subject or as subject to object. To confound these two relations is to perpetuate one or other of the various fallacies that are at the bottom of every error in religious thinking and in the religious life.

In this matter, as in all things, experience must be our guide ; and the consensus of experience, both in its religious and in its scientific form, is that so far at least as our practical contacts with it are concerned, the world of inanimate nature, while it is a system of selves, is not a world of experience-bearing selves. The practical corollary to this is that we must treat it as an object or system of objects and not as a community of subjects. But if so, its purely phenomenal aspect acquires a preponderating significance. Although it is more than a succession of appearances, a

passing shadow-show, nevertheless the systematic observation of its appearances serves in many cases all the purposes both of knowledge and of action. In this way the phenomenalism that is inherent in physics becomes a valuable corrective to the errors of a latter-day animism.

*The Distinction between Object-selves and  
Subject-selves*

Certain final distinctions call for a word of comment. In the first place it is necessary to observe that the conception of selfhood with which we have been dealing divides along the line of subjects and objects. There are object-selves and subject-selves. The independent Real which we have seen to be the object of experience, when experience assumes the form of a series of transformable appearances, can hardly be accredited with selfhood in the sense in which we attribute selfhood to subjects. There are, however, certain selves, the lower animals, for example, and perhaps even plants, to which on the whole we address ourselves as to objects, yet in a way that seems to imply the admission in them of something akin to subject-selfhood. We do not communicate with them on a basis of intelligent reciprocity, but we differentiate our attitude towards them from our attitude to mere 'things', by modifying the mechanism of our approaches, and by leaving them to work out their elaborate and frequently long-deferred responses to our solicitations, in accordance with their own organic laws. On the other hand there is something in the constitution of a finite subject-self that makes it difficult for us to treat it, in any but

exceptional cases, exclusively as a subject. In so far as our contacts with our fellow men are bound to be in most cases superficial and one-sided, we fail to do justice to the subject-self within them. In extreme cases they are little better than our objects. The religious import of the distinction between subject- and object-selfhood will be made apparent later.

*.Object-selves and Object-events*

There is another difference that is less easily stated. The difficulty has to do with object-selves, and more particularly with their relation to the units of physical reality. Not only is there a profound difference between these units and the objects to which, as a result of experience, we attribute real existence, but from the standpoint of physics it is highly doubtful whether we are entitled to attribute any kind of selfhood to the latter. This would apply to the great mass of experienced objects in the world around us, those gross structures which we distinguish from one another in classes by the aid of common names. Some of these are natural products, rivers and mountains, stones and earth, grains of sand and drops of water. Others are the artificial product of man's labour, tables and chairs, houses and churches. Some belong to that highly ambiguous class which in ordinary life we treat as objects, but which physics analyses into complex processes or events. The latter may be considered as something in the nature of a test-case. Let us therefore consider them more particularly.

The class in question is typified by such natural phenomena as wind and fire and waves of the sea ;

and the problem might be stated in some such terms as the following. Granted that the empirical phenomenon of fire must be reduced to the process of combustion, is there any sense in which a flame may be considered a real object with a nature of its own? Granted that a sea wave is a motion of water, is there any sense in which we are entitled to regard it as a real, self-identical object? The latter instance gains in complexity if we reflect that the visible movement of the wave is quite different from the movements into which physics analyses the total phenomenon.

When we stand on the shore and watch a wave advancing towards us, what we seem to see is a well-defined object in motion. The motion of the visible object is horizontal, and is measurable along a line extending from the observer outward across the surface of the ocean. Yet the horizontal motion of the gross visible object, when analysed by the physicist, resolves into a vast succession of vertical motions on the part of the physical units (whatever these may be) which together constitute the bulk of the wave; and the appearance of horizontal movement is due to a rhythmic change in the length of the vertical movements executed by the units. The same effect would be produced by a row of soldiers jumping up and down on their own ground and on a preconcerted plan, whereby each individual in turn should increase and diminish the height of his jump by fixed successive amounts. In this case the really existing entities would be the individual soldiers, and the actually occurring motion would be their individual movements. In comparison with these the row itself and the wave-like process trans-

mitted from end to end of the row assume the character of an *ens rationis*, a mere summation. In the same way the wave and its horizontal movement appear as something relatively unreal—the plotting of a statistical curve upon a real background of nature. Yet in this case the curve is plotted by nature herself. Furthermore it is the wave and its movement that we actually experience as the real object and the real event, whereas the existence and the movement of physical particles is apprehended as a mental construction.

The physicist however would point out that this is an accident due to the conditions of human perception. If owing to distance, or for some other reason, the scale of visible appearances could be reduced as it is when we look through the wrong end of a telescope, a point might be reached at which we could no longer distinguish the individual soldiers and their vertical movements, while still able to perceive the row and the wave-motion transmitted along it. And such, generally speaking, is our predicament as regards the sea wave and its motion. But the fact that our imperfect organs of sense do not permit us to perceive the unitary members in the total presentation does not mean that these members are not the reality in the case, whereas the visible object, with its accompanying process, is mere appearance.

This conception is worthy of closer inspection. Admitting that the gross visible object is appearance, we must ask in what sense it is so. It could hardly be maintained, from any point of view, that it is appearance and nothing more—appearance as such, independent and unrelated to anything in the real world. The question therefore arises: How are we

to relate the appearance to what is more than appearance? Can we say for example that it is the appearance *of the vertically moving physical particles*? Apparently not. For the *appearance* of the particles is the appearance which the particles *would present* if conditions could be found which would render them visible. In that case, however, the resulting appearance would be that of vertically and not of horizontally moving bodies.

Can we say then that the wave is the appearance of the *successive movements* (or of the *succession of the movements*) of the ultimate units, whatever these may be? Of course there is truth in this; but the weakness of all such descriptions is that from the standpoint of actual experience they seem to leave something out. In this instance the omitted element of truth is the fact that within a definite portion of the space of experience and for a definite experienced duration there has come into existence a well-defined content of space and time, which is needed in order that there may be something to which the physical description may apply. In other words the complex of events into which physical science analyses the phenomenon in question is the content of a more or less individuated system of units, with their movements; and the gross object (in this case, *object-event*) is no mere subjective distortion or falsification of physical truth: rather it is the objective system itself, as it comes into existence and runs its course, epitomizing and defining itself in outline under the conditions of human experience. The surface of the wave is not the theoretical product of a series of positions, designed in space, as the orbits of the planets are designed, by the movements of loci. It

is no mere abstractum of the successive upward limits of the vertically moving particles. If it is an abstraction at all, it is so not in relation to the movements of these units, but in relation to the three-dimensional content of space which we call the wave. It is the outer limit of that content, marking the place where matter ceases to organize itself in the form of water and begins to organize itself in the form of air. But if so, there would seem to be ontological reality in the gross structure as well as in the minute. As a matter of fact the existence of each is conditioned by that of the other. The systems in which nature articulates itself exist only in so far as the units that compose them are existing units ; and the latter exist only in the systems which supply the relations required in order to express their physical nature.

Whether or not a system of the type with which we have been dealing deserves the name of a self is of course, as has been remarked, to some extent a question of definition ; and it cannot but be acknowledged that every such system, in so far as it lacks the elements of selfhood that depend on the possibility of inner experience, is less unambiguously a self than is a human being. On the other hand it has a unity and identity that is not a pure convention of our subjective attitude to the total phenomenon. It is something which we discover in the objective world of nature, something which, as our experience develops, imposes itself upon our observation as one of nature's possible combinations actualizing itself in the world of real events.

It would not be possible, therefore, to regard such an object as a sea wave either as a pure appearance or

as the appearance of its physical components. Strictly speaking, we should not regard it as an appearance at all, but as a real object or object-event, of which the appearances are the successive images which it presents when seen at different stages of its progress and from all possible points of view. Even the horizontal movement which gives place upon analysis to a series of vertical movements is more than an appearance. It is the movement of the wave, and its reality is attested by the same considerations which permit us to assign an ontological status to the latter, and in other ways as well. Under certain conditions the vertical movement is actually converted into a horizontal movement in the direction of the wave's advance, as when billows of a sufficient amplitude and steepness break forward at their crests, or when, as the water shoals, a floating object is both lifted up and driven forward. If the floating object happens to be our own body, we have fresh empirical evidence of the reality of the lateral movement in the felt pressure of the wave as it bears us forward to the shore.

A somewhat similar argument would apply to the very different case of manufactured objects. The fact that the unity and identity of such objects has been artificially imposed under the direction of ideas and purposes which are relative to human life and human thought, does not imply that such unity is in itself purely conventional. It is true that we may regard a table or a chair, from different points of view, either as a unit or as a plurality of units ; but what is variable and conventional in this case is the point of view and not the object in question. A table, for example, although it consists of many parts which were previ-

ously separate, once it has become a table, is not many things but one thing. It is an actually existing system of units which experience has revealed to us as possible under certain conditions actually supplied by our productive labour. And the characteristics of a table are none the less real, none the less empirically demonstrable, because they owe their existence to our efforts. That there are elements and characteristics in the minute structure which do not enter into our ordinary experience of the object does not imply either that our experience of the object is illusory or that the object as we ordinarily experience it is unreal.

That some objects of experience are by nature evanescent and others artificial, that all such objects involve a minute structure and motions which are not experienced at all, does not affect the ontological standing of anything which reveals itself as the objective equivalent of the transformability of its own appearances. Of course this does not rule out the possibility that many of the combinations which we mark in language (for example, in nouns of multitude) are no better than artificial combinations. There are cases in which it is convenient to consider a number of things together, and when this happens frequently, we acquire the habit of thinking in terms of the selected group. But there is a marked difference, reflected in experience, between such artificial combinations and the combinations which are ontologically prior to experience. It is usually easy to deduct from the possible objects of consciousness such as are not ontologically authorized. On the other hand, while the psychological habit of reification extends to combinations for which an independent

reality or genuine selfhood can hardly be claimed, it is doubtless true that many real selves exist which we have not discovered to be such. And there are certain entities as to the selfhood of which we are in doubt.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### THE INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE

#### *Recapitulation of the Preceding Argument*

WE are now in a position to bring into exact relationship a number of ideas that are fundamental to the interpretation of religion. Chief among these are the ideas of introversion and of life. At the end of Chapter XVIII<sup>1</sup> it was pointed out that religion implies an introverted view of nature. The further elucidation of this conception was postponed until we should have developed the concept of nature itself. In the course of this latter inquiry we have dealt with two more or less distinct concepts of nature, in one of which, under the influence of physics, nature appears as primarily a system of phenomena, while in the other it appears as a system of objective selves.

On investigation it was found that neither of these views could be fully sustained. Nature cannot be considered as nothing but appearance, for appearances considered as such are unable to furnish all the conditions implied in the fact of their existence. In order that anything may exist, *something* must exist which is more than appearance; and so it is that on a phenomenalist interpretation of physics the idea of existence has sometimes to be introduced artificially.

On the other hand the view of nature as a system of selves, which is imposed on us by biological science

<sup>1</sup> Above, p. 168.

in some of its aspects, is one which does not readily admit of generalization in the realm of inorganic things; and even in the realm of the organic there are serious limitations of its application.

We conclude, therefore, that the phenomenalist interpretation of nature must lean over in a direction which implies the covert admission of a realm of selves; while the view of nature as consisting of selves is restricted by a certain opaqueness in the selfhood of natural objects, and is therefore forced to lean over in the direction of phenomenalism.

*The Problem of Religion, in its Distinction from  
the Problem of Natural Knowledge*

As against both these views religion stands squarely for an interpretation, not primarily of nature, but of *existence*, in the light of all that experience can tell us as to what it means to be a self. From this point of view we may say that religious knowledge or insight distinguishes itself from natural knowledge, in its initial formulation of the problem. The problem of natural knowledge may be stated as follows: What can we know as to the nature of that which exists, by a study of its appearances? Whereas the problem of religion, in its theoretical aspect, would have to be stated in some such terms as these: What can we know of the meaning of existence from the standpoint of that which actually exists—that is, from a standpoint at which existence reveals itself as an experience and not merely as an observable fact?

*Introversion on the Animistic and on the  
Theistic Level*

It will be seen that an introverted view of existence and of nature is implied in religion from the beginning. The introverted view of existence gives us our desire for life, the introverted view of nature gives us that succession of views which starts with animism and ends with monistic theism. In order to understand the significance of introversion we must look at it in the light of this latter development. The meaning of the conception at the level of animism is very different from its meaning in Christianity. At the level of animism, the introverted view of existence precedes all others. There is a period in which it is alone without a competitor; and in so far as this is so, it does not imply a specific act of introversion.<sup>1</sup> The view of life which comes to man already, so to speak, introverted, is introverted only in the most superficial sense. It is a view which does not involve any depth of selfhood experience. Life is essentially a thing of the body, although in saying so we do not mean that for primitive man it is no more than an observable phenomenon. To be alive is to be a living body, just as to be dead is to be a ghost. The standpoint from which in a later age the introverted view of life and nature is seen to presuppose a distinct act of introversion, implies a marked advance both in the range and in the depth of human experience. Certain alternative possibilities of interpretation have arisen. In one of these

<sup>1</sup> The second birth implicit in the primitive rites of initiation does not amount to such a birth.

the body still plays a preponderating rôle. The meaning of life is to be found in bodily existence and in all that ministers to it and to the desires that rest most directly upon it. Experience of what it is to be alive is experience of all that conduces to the maintenance, the adornment and refinement of an existence which still reports itself to us in the form of what it is to be a living body. The fully introverted view of life depends upon the possibility of an experience that goes beyond all this—an experience which discovers to us meanings that are not the meaning of bodily existence as such, however refined by culture and civilization. It is not that the body has become a matter of indifference. Orthodox Christianity at least has repudiated all Gnostic attempts to reduce it to a mere appearance. There is a life which is the life of the body ; but the deeper life of the spirit, which is also a possibility of actual experience, is more than this. It is true that that life must sustain itself, even in the next world, by some appropriate bodily counterpart ; but the body in question will be in some way different—a spiritual body—one commensurate with an experience that has become profoundly internal. A realization of what this means cannot be achieved, as the primitive man's introverted view of nature is achieved, by slow and natural processes of evolution. It comes, if at all, in the form of a clash of experiences, or at least of a contrast sufficiently powerful to produce a sense of something new and unique—an order of reality that is other than the natural order.

If we are right in our conception of religion as man's preoccupation with life, we must add that religion is not true to its own nature unless the

conception of life undergoes this transformation. A practical criterion would be the extent to which any religion succeeds in thus transforming the conception of life. Along with this process there must go another, whereby the concept of nature is likewise transformed in the direction of theism, and the extent of the transformation here may be taken as a second criterion. A third will be found in the relation between the two omnipresent aspects of religion. At first man's interest presumably is more in his own preservation than in the nature and attributes of the divine beings with which he peoples the physical world. It is the mark of a developed religion that the centre of interest shall have passed from man's preoccupation with himself to a preoccupation with God. The thing that matters, as I have remarked, is not that he, the finite subject, should continue to exist, but the fact that God liveth ; and the highest expression of the religious consciousness is to be found in the complete subjugation of all interests to our interest in a living God.

This position, involving as it does the self-surrender of the individual, is by no means identical with that of oriental mysticism. For while at this highest level the individual is willing to surrender his existence, and even, if need be, his personal salvation, it is from profoundly different motives. In volunteering this supreme sacrifice, Saint Paul, for example, is thinking of the salvation of others <sup>1</sup> ; and it is only with a view to their salvation that he conceives this idea of supreme self-abnegation. It would seem to be a postulate of the Christian standpoint that the

<sup>1</sup> "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."—Romans ix, 3.

existence of finite human selves, so far from being the root of all evil, is a divine necessity. Man, with all his limitations, is necessary to God. In the divine eyes his soul, his personality, is inexpressibly valuable ; and his hope of immortality is either a vain aspiration, or else it is an expression of this fact. Religion at its highest does not demand the absorption and loss of finite individuality in the Divine : it demands the conservation of such individuality for God ; and this conservation is what Christianity calls salvation. To conserve his personality for God becomes the supreme object of the religious life. In this business of soul-conservation God Himself is the ruling factor. To say that the Christian seeks the salvation of his soul is to say that he trusts his life to God. Without the saving efficacy of the divine being his quest would be in vain. Nevertheless the saving grace of God implies an attitude in the human recipient. Salvation is a transaction which involves personal relations on both sides. Our immediate business, however, is not with the nature and the conditions of salvation, but with the theoretical validity of the conceptions upon which the idea of salvation depends.

The notions of an introverted view of life and an introverted view of nature are thus closely bound up with one another. Furthermore they are both the direct product of experience. Indeed we may say that as human experience develops, there comes a point at which a continual transition from and to an introverted and an extraverted view of nature and life becomes necessary.<sup>1</sup> This necessity makes its

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a word of apology is necessary for my use of terms which, in a cognate form, have already been appropriated with a very different meaning in the psychology of Jung.

appearance as soon as the implicit duality of experience gives rise to a well-defined bifurcation, in which self-consciousness and a consciousness of objects divide human knowledge between them. Introversion is therefore not a miraculous exception to the ordinary rules of experience. Religion and the peculiar experiences which religion brings with it are indeed necessary to a perfect act of introversion. But the general possibility and validity of the process is guaranteed by the duality of finite experience, and by the fact that in passing from one aspect of experience to the other men actually execute the act.

*The Two Forms of the Introverted View of Life :  
Life as Episodic and as Comprehensive*

In the sequel I shall deal in turn with the introverted view of life and the introverted view of nature. As regards the former, considerable progress has already been made in the preceding chapter. In the present chapter we shall continue our analysis of the meaning of life. This further analysis implies the introduction of a new distinction into the general concept. So far we have distinguished life as an observable phenomenon of nature from life as we know it in the actual experience of living. But this is not enough. In particular the distinction as thus stated errs through over-simplification. Only in certain highly advanced stages of biological inquiry do we find ourselves committed to a strictly phenomenalist interpretation of life. For the most part even in biological science our view is much less well-defined, and is far from being rigidly consistent. In all our ordinary thinking and in our ordinary speech we

blend the phenomenalist view with the other in an utterly uncritical fashion. So far then as our scientific, and most of our unscientific thinking about life are concerned, we seldom or never concentrate exclusively upon the meaning of life as something revealed to us in the very act of living. Far less do we seek to draw from our experience of what it means to be alive the deeper implications of existence. In our final analysis all this must be taken into account; and when we do thus take it into account, it is found that the twofold division is inadequate. Instead of two, there are really three main senses in which the conception of life is understood.

Life is revealed to us as an observable phenomenon or phenomenal process—a long-drawn-out event in time. As such it clearly belongs to the realm of nature, which is the universal system of events. To be alive in this sense, to be a living thing, is to possess the characteristic marks of the phenomenon in question. It is to be an object of a particular kind. This conception of life has been sufficiently emphasized. Again, life is likewise the content of an experience which may or may not include the experience of having objects, but is certainly the experience of being a subject. It is a certain difference here that compels us to convert this twofold into a threefold division of life. When we speak of life as experienced *existence*, we may do so in two senses. First, it is what we experience as the subject of any experience whatever. Now let the experience in question be what it will—sensation, instinct, psycho-physical conation—experience in this sense is the *succession* of experience-events. Each one of these we call an experience. But the possibilities of experience and of

life are not exhausted by any such succession. Life is emphatically not just one event after another. Not only is it a succession of experiences : it is an *experience* of succession—the *sequent events being in this case themselves experiences*.

This description must not be taken to indicate only the observation of sequence, added in the form of a mental comment. Such observation is assuredly implied ; but when the events which follow one another are, as has been said, themselves experiences, their succession acquires a peculiar fulness and depth of significance. That one *experience* follows another is a thing that matters in ways which are not expressed by the fact of sequence as such, and by such facts of a formal and logical nature as sequence implies. Obvious examples are to be found in those well-defined phases of life—childhood, adolescence, old age—which have always had a special significance for religion ; and also in the sequences—means and end, motive and act, act and consequence—which carry moral import. But the most striking characteristic of experience in this aspect is a certain cumulative quality, a power it offers of *comprehending* our experiences themselves, as they eventuate, in the content of a larger experience. This act of comprehension must not be thought of as something purely intellectual, a mere reflection upon past events. It is itself an experience and an experience of singular importance—an experience of which the content is other experience. In a word it is *the experience of having experiences*.

In so far as these distinctions bear upon the nature of life, we must seek to apply them to the latter conception. If life may be interpreted as what it

means to be alive, what it means to be alive may be interpreted in two senses—an episodic sense and a comprehensive sense—corresponding to the distinction to which attention has been drawn.

*Religion is Preoccupation with Life in the 'Comprehensive' Sense, i.e. it is the Experience of what Experience means*

It is upon the relationship between the two senses in which it is possible to *enjoy* life as an experience (in contradistinction to the sense in which it is possible to observe it as a phenomenon) that the nature and validity of religion turn. Religion we have defined in a general way as a preoccupation with life. We are now able to state specifically wherein this preoccupation consists. It consists in a sustained process, whereby the experience of living, as this unfolds itself episodically in time, becomes the content of another, a comprehensive, experience, which we can only describe by saying that it is the experience of what the former means. To pass from experience in the first of these senses to experience in the second is itself an act of introversion, and upon it the religious view of life depends. Everything now turns upon our ability to make clear what this higher experience implies—in other words, what it means to *experience experience*.

The conception is one which it is excessively difficult to formulate in the theoretical terms of an abstract philosophical inquiry. None the less the attempt must be made. The task is not rendered easier by the fact that all the ideas involved are thoroughly familiar. Indeed this fact is at the bottom

of the main difficulty, which is due to our inveterate mental habit of dealing with the familiar in certain stereotyped and conventional ways, and thus not only failing to observe, but positively blinding ourselves to, the profoundly significant and far-reaching implications of the ideas in question. In the present instance the idea which stands in the way is the idea of self-consciousness.

*The Experience of Experience is not Equivalent  
to 'Self-consciousness'*

When I speak of what it means to experience experience, it will probably be assumed that what I have in mind is nothing more than what it means to be conscious of self. Now it is true that I do mean this; but the familiar expression 'self-consciousness' entirely fails to suggest what I hope to bring out by the notion, when interpreted in terms of actual experience.

Perhaps the best way in which to approach the deeper revelations of experience would be to begin where we are already perfectly at home, namely, with our ordinary experience of objects. Analysis has shown that in this elementary form of experience the fundamental condition is the transformability of one content into another. This implies that a present appearance comes to us as the equivalent of past and future appearances. Of each presentation, as it occurs, we may say that it *means* every other presentation, as well as the completed series. We may say, moreover, that every presentation conveys the meaning of the object of which all the presentations in the series are the appearances. Hence it is

no less true that the object means the appearances than that the latter mean the object. The object means the appearances not in the sense that it is nothing but the presentation-series, but in the sense that under the appropriate conditions the object appears successively in each of the presentations.

Now if we consider these various factors from the standpoint of their temporal relations, we see that the real object exists *at* and *for* a time that is not exactly determinable by the time of its appearances. The latter come and go according as the conditions required to render them possible occur or do not occur. Thus the object may, at least theoretically, precede any and all of its appearances in the order of time, and likewise may survive any one of them or all of them together. In other words, it is not, theoretically speaking, necessary to the existence of any object that it should *appear*. This of course must not be taken to mean that the object is a timeless thing-in-itself. It has a time of its own, as the appearances have a time of their own ; and within the limits of human experience, it may be assumed that the duration of real objects covers the time at least of some of their appearances. Furthermore, if it is the case that an object may survive any or all of the latter, it is no less true that there are appearances (those, for example, that imply a transmitting medium such as light or air) which may survive the object itself.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Whether or not an appearance may precede its object is a question with which I am not competent to deal ; but it looks as if such a possibility would imply not only the relativity of dates (which may be granted), but also a reduction of real objects to the system of their appearances—a view which is incompatible with the theory I am advocating.

There is, however, another side to the case. If an independent Real is definable as the actually existing objective counterpart of the series of its appearances, and if these appearances are distributed in time, then the temporal succession of the appearances has as its objective counterpart the permanent self-identity of the object. In a word, the fact that the appearances come and go does not of itself imply that the object comes and goes. It is true that it may do so, but if this is the case, it does not come and go in accordance with the law which governs the temporary character and sequence of its appearances, but in accordance with some other law. The object is related to its appearances *somewhat*, though not exactly, as the total series of the latter is related to their succession. It is the permanent system within which they fall. In comparison with the appearances, therefore, the object may be looked upon as a changeless existent.

Let us now substitute for the idea of appearances, as related to their object, the idea of our successive *experiences*, as related to *the experience of their succession*. Our problem will be to define the latter conception by the aid of analogies derived from the previous case.

To begin with, then, the experience in question, the experience which has as its content other experiences, is a thing which occurs and develops in time. It is not like the timeless principle of Thomas Hill Green, any more than the permanent object is like the Kantian noumenon. In the second place, just as the time-relations of the real object are not to be confused with the time-relations of its appearances, although they are connected with the latter in ways

which can be to some extent determined, so the time-relations of the experience with which we are dealing, although connected with the time-relations of the contributory experiences which are its content, are not to be confused with the latter. It is obvious that we cannot have an experience of experiences until the latter are to some extent on the way. This would seem to imply a certain priority on the part of the contributory experiences. Yet it must not be assumed that the relationship is invariable in this respect. If at the outset we must think of the experiences, which eventually become the content of a deeper experience, as for some distance a step or two in advance, we must complete the conception by adding to it the idea of the latter as gradually overtaking the former, until a point is reached at which the two orders of experience are found advancing *pari passu*, but at different levels of significance. This last phrase need not for the present be taken to mean more than that when one experience is *the experience of another*, the former must be assumed to include all the meanings that the latter includes, as well as something more—the meanings, namely, that the latter *implies*. In other words, we have here two orders of experience, each with its own content, but the content of the one not only comprises the total content of the other, but also includes that other experience as a special content of its own.

When this point is reached, the contributory experiences begin to assume, in relation to one another, something of the character of transformable appearances ; and the deeper experience becomes the experience of their transformability. This in turn implies that the deeper experience relates itself to the con-

tributary not only retrospectively but in advance. It makes itself felt as a permanent attitude of the self to all the possibilities of experience, past, present and future.

*The Individual's Experience of his own Past and Future Experiences is a Mode of Present Experience*

The further elucidation of this idea requires that we keep steadily in mind the fact that what I have just described as a permanent attitude of the self is an actual *experience* of the self—an experience which begins and develops in time, and spreads itself over the rest of our experiences as they succeed one another in the course of nature. The idea is that which we usually express by some such phrase as “an experience of life”—only, by an experience of life we are too apt to mean little more than an abstract epitome, a system of observations, something which, like wealth, we have acquired and stored up for use as the occasion demands. The experience of life which I have in mind is not something abstracted or extracted from life. Rather it is the actual experience of being alive, when being alive includes the consciousness, (1) of what it has meant in the past to be alive, (2) of what it *now* means to have been thus alive in the past, and (3) of what it means that the life of the moment implies a perpetual transition into the future.

These ideas in turn imply that we bring experience itself into actual relations with the future and the past—a relation which is unique and without a parallel, and which can be rendered intelligible only on the assumption, and from the standpoint, of

experience-bearing selves. We have to think of the past and the future, not only as eventuating but as *experienced*. We have to think of ourselves as experiencing the past and the future. Now obviously the past and the future which we are capable of experiencing can be only what we call *our* past and *our* future. There are doubtless points of view from which these expressions are no better than a "manner of speaking"—a rough and inaccurate epitome of what, were it expressed exactly, would require the statement of many sequent and objective facts. But these points of view, while possible and legitimate, are the result of forgetting or excluding the standpoint of experience itself. The past, as we experience it, is not a sequence of objective facts—although for certain intellectual purposes we may treat it as such. When we do so, however, we omit from the total truth one very real and vital distinction—the distinction between the past which we know because we have experienced it, and the past which we know because we have heard about it, or have constructed it for ourselves upon the basis of certain evidences. What we call 'our past' is not a fact or collection of facts of the same order as the past history of the world—facts which we merely *discover* to have been at one time the course of current events. The difference is due to the circumstance that for beings constituted as we are, experience-bearing selves, all present experience includes in its content a special element, which is the actual experience of what it is to have had previous experience, and to have had precisely the previous experience which we designate our own. In other words, to have had past experience is itself an experience of the present ; it is the experi-

ence of what it means to have had that experience in the past ; or, briefly, the *fact* that we have had past experience is a *mode* of present experience.

The case of the future presents special difficulties. It may seem a somewhat reckless thing to assert that we have experience of the future. When we speak of " our future ", and thereby seem to claim a future experience, as we do a past, of *our own*, the phrase can hardly be taken as an exact analogue of " our past ". The past is a past of actual experience, and is therefore in a sense fixed and final ; but our future is a mere possibility, the ideal content of our dreams, our fears, our conjectures. Yet the unrealized possibilities that lie ahead of us, obscure and problematical as they are, contribute no less surely than do the finalities of our past to the experience of the present. What we call present experience is a perpetually renewed adjustment of the psycho-physical organism to these same uncertain possibilities ; and the very act of adjustment is an act of realization. Aristotle has defined the present as what divides the past and the future.<sup>1</sup> This is a highly abstract way of putting the matter ; and we certainly do not *experience* the present as the abstraction that divides one moment from another. What we experience is, subjectively speaking, the act of adjustment ; and we cannot experience an act of adjustment without experiencing the past and the future concurrently. Objectively speaking, the experience of a present is an experience of the process whereby the future *becomes* the present, and in the very moment of transition is found to have become the past. Thus every experience of the present implies the fact which we call the future ; and

<sup>1</sup> *Phys.* Δ 218 a 9.

the fact which we call the future, like the fact which we call the past, is a *mode* of present experience.

*The Bearing of these Conclusions on the Conception  
of an Introverted View of Life*

Applying these conclusions to the conception with which we are dealing—the conception of an introverted view of life—we may define the latter as the view of life as an actual experience, in which the life that has been lived, and the life that is still to be, internalize themselves in the content of an ever-changing present. By this I mean that the present, as we experience it, is the very antithesis of what Aristotle conceives it, in one of its aspects, to be—namely, the durationless, and therefore non-existent, boundary between a past which, as he himself shows, must, from the standpoint of his definition, be thought of as that which has ceased, and is, therefore, non-existent, and a future which, from the same point of view, is also non-existent because it has not begun to be. Every experienced present is a ‘specious’ present, and this is presupposed as the fundamental condition of all true religion. Were it not so, that preoccupation with life in which religion consists would be impossible, for there would be nothing with which to be preoccupied. At least there would be nothing but vain regretful memories of a non-existent past and empty speculation upon a non-existent future. The religious preoccupation with life is specifically the preoccupation with a life of experience which is momentarily reborn in every fleeting instant, as the content of the past surges up again in the present, and the future enters into the

realm of actualized possibilities. It is not as a *division* of life that we must view the present, but as the actual experience of breaking down abstract or potential divisions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle does not fail to recognize this aspect of the truth about time as well as the other. The present as he conceives it is not only a division, but is also a 'time-binder'—a limit which is continuous with what it limits in both directions. It is interesting to note that he suggests an argument of Bergson's in pointing out that time-divisions cannot be interpreted on the analogy of discrete spatial divisions—points—although he discriminates between these and pure mathematical entities such as lines. *Vide* Phys. Δ 222, a 10 sq. It will be observed that the distinction of *δύναμις* and *ἐνέργεια* is at the bottom of the two-fold view.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### WHAT RELIGION ADDS TO THE INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE

So far, however, we have been dealing with something which is universal in human experience, something therefore which, while it furnishes the indispensable condition of religion, the truth about life upon which religion seizes and upon which it lives, still falls short of what religion actually is. Religion is not life itself, even in its introverted form : it is a preoccupation which generates a new and specific order of experience, and issues in a still further introversion. The relationship of religious experience to the experience of life in general is twofold. Religious experience is at once a *product* and an effectual *condition* of introversion. Unless it were already possible for us to experience life from within, as living beings do, it would be impossible to attain to anything in the nature of religious experience ; and without this experience we should be unable to realize all that introversion means.

*Religion reveals Meanings which without the Offices of Religion could never become the Meanings of Actual Experience. What Religion offers is the Life Eternal. The Function of Religion is to*

*turn our Experience of Life into an Experience of the Life Eternal*

Religious experience, then, like experience in general, is a revealer of meanings. Only, the meanings which religion reveals are *new* meanings, meanings which, without the offices of religion, could never become the meanings of actual experience. I have already pointed out that existence as experienced (which is what we living beings mean by life) is not an object or a fact of experience, but is experience itself revealing one of its meanings. But the meaning of existence as revealed in the experience of living falls far short of the meaning which religious experience professes to reveal in life. We must now ask : What is that new meaning which religion adds to the meaning of life as already introverted by the conditions which render it an actual experience rather than an observable phenomenon of nature ? The answer is : What religion offers is the life eternal.

Before we can hope to estimate the claims of this stupendous conception, we must try to understand what the conception implies. It would probably be correct to say that in the mind of the average man the phrase ' eternal life ' connotes no more than the endless prolongation of personal existence. Now it may well be that this idea is *implied*, but without more ado to identify the life eternal with the indefinite extension of our human existence beyond the grave is a naïve procedure, well calculated to bring the idea into disrepute. What warrant have we, it will be asked, either in the facts of human experience, or in what science has to tell us about life, for any such assumption ? From another point of view the desirability of

eternal life, so understood, will be called in question, and not without some show of reason. Is life as we know it so unambiguously good that a reasonable man would wish to see it indefinitely prolonged? And even if we add to the idea of its prolongation the idea of its perfectibility, would not an eternity of life end in utter satiety and eventual exhaustion or despair? Doubtless there is something exhilarating in a struggle towards perfection; but is not a struggle that goes on for ever a dismal and depressing prospect? If, on the other hand, the struggle ends in a completed achievement, what is there to look forward to in the eternity that still remains? A static perfection? But how can such an idea be rendered compatible with the idea of life? And how can such an *ideal* be rendered attractive to living beings, whose very nature it is to be restless? At the best there is something nearly meaningless in the thought of endlessly repeated functions, of endlessly prolonged existence; and Hegel was right when he saw in the "bad infinite" only an occasion for boredom.

Fortunately it is not necessary to reply in detail to the questions raised; for the assumptions upon which they are based are assumptions which overlook the *reinterpretation* of life implied in religious experience—a reinterpretation which must precede any attempt to explain the life eternal. That life of which an eternity is offered, if it is anything at all, is a life which can be experienced here and now, provided the conditions of such experience are forthcoming.

In the following argument I shall distinguish between the various fundamental meanings of life by appropriating to each a special name, for which there

WHAT RELIGION ADDS TO INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE is a certain warrant in ancient usage. There is life as βίος (Bios), life as ζωή (Zoë), and eternal life (ἡ αἰώνιος ζωή).

In the order of nature Bios stands for the life of the body pure and simple, life in the biological sense. Unfortunately the term will have to do double service by sustaining two closely related, yet distinct, meanings. First there is the consistently naturalistic sense, in which the word connotes life as an observable phenomenon or phenomenal process—a long succession of natural events and nothing more—life, therefore, in a sense which does not include the fact of consciousness. In the second place, by Bios I shall understand the life of conscious organisms in so far as it is sought to identify this with bodily processes. The latter conception is obviously of highly dubious validity ; but it undoubtedly represents an actually existing tendency of thought, the tendency to explain the *experience* of life in terms of organic function.

The second fundamental meaning is that in which life is identified with the experience of living—life in the sense of Zoë. In relation to the previous naturalistic conception, Zoë implies an introverted view of life ; but the introversion, in so far as it comes naturally with the universal conditions of human experience, and does not require that the experience be specifically religious, leaves room for a further act of introversion, an act which religion alone can render possible. The connection between religion and Zoë is, however, close and unmistakable. It is a further illustration of the distinction between the adjectival and the substantival aspects of religion. For while the experience of living is not itself a religious function, as has been pointed out, it fur-

nishes religion with its starting-point and material. It is the function of religion to turn our experience of life into an experience of the life eternal. There is therefore something in the former which is of religious significance. Hence it is that the life of conscious beings is very generally regarded as sacred even before it has been rendered sacred by the specific sanctions of religion.

*'Life' in the Religious Sense*

We come now to the final conception of life—that life which, from the earliest times, man has sought, by the aid of religion, to add to the life already within him. This is the life which first appears as the ideal content of man's desire to live, when that desire differentiates itself, as an idealization, from the natural instinct of self-preservation. In the religion of primitive man, however, the idealization was neither logically pure nor ideally complete. The life desired was still conceived in terms of bodily existence, with, no doubt, whatever of added advantage was within the compass of a primitive imagination and intelligence. It required many centuries of religious experience before the idealization, purged of inevitable crudities, and rendered adequate to the logic implicit in a mature experience of life itself, re-emerged in the conception of the life eternal—the *αἰώνιος ζωή* of Christian promise.

Our problem now turns upon the relation between *ζωή* and *αἰώνιος ζωή*—the life of experience in general and that eternal life which is the fully developed idealization of the former.

*Further Consideration of the 'Specious Present'*

As we have seen, the life which is one with the experience of living unfolds itself as the content of an ever-changing specious present, in which past and future lose their separate identity and pass into one another. This conception, however, as it has been stated, is thoroughly obscure and paradoxical; and it will remain so until certain difficulties have been cleared up and certain implications made plain.

In the first place the conception of a specious present is itself bafflingly vague. By a specious present we must understand a present that *endures*—a present which is more than “a durationless instant of time”, and which, therefore, *requires time* in order to make it an actually experienced present. But the question arises: How much time is required in order to constitute any specific duration a present in this sense? At first sight it might appear as if such a question were simply unanswerable; and it would be so if it were a purely formal question having to do with the logic of time-relations. Or rather, I should say, from the formal point of view the question is entirely one of definition, and the answer would be: Any time whatever, which will meet the conditions assumed in the definition of an instant.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact such definitions do not help us at all except in dealing with the purely formal aspect of the subject; and in so far as we are concerned with

<sup>1</sup> As for example in Mr. Bertrand Russell's definition: “An ‘instant’ is the class of all events which enclose members of a given punctual enclosure-series”. *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 121.

the time of actual experience, we must seek an entirely different solution.

Such a solution, however, is forthcoming if we know how to extract it from the experience of time. As we have seen, the present of experience is an actual experience, or experienced process, whereby the future becomes the past. Beginning from this as our basic conception, we see that the time required, by the conditions of experience, to constitute a specious present is the time it takes for the experience of any event to become a past experience.

It will doubtless be objected that this definition is vitiated by the vagueness of the term 'event', and that the inclusion of this term leaves the question : *How much time?* unanswered. For obviously it is difficult to say just what it takes to make an event. Events differ indefinitely in the time they occupy ; and one event may actually include others.

It might be pointed out in reply that there is no obvious reason why one specious present should not differ in duration from another. From the purely logical point of view an instant may be as long as we choose to think it, just as a point may have any magnitude whatever. The same thing is true when we think of the actual uses of the word 'present'. We speak of the present moment, the present day, the present century, the present geological era. It would be impossible, however, to avail ourselves of such liberties as these linguistic considerations offer. For the time with which we are dealing is the time of human experience, an experience of which it is by no means true that " a thousand years are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night ". The time of such experience does not

WHAT RELIGION ADDS TO INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE  
differentiate itself upon a basis of units which may  
exceed the span of human life or of human history.

*The Duration of a 'Specious Present' determined  
by the time required for a single well-defined  
Act of Adjustment to Environment*

Once more, then, experience must be our guide to the solutions we are seeking. The duration of those events whose passage into the past is the measure of a specious present, is determined by the time which the psycho-physical organism requires in order to complete a single well-defined adjustment to its environment. The present of experience is therefore measured, not so much by those events, historical or cosmic, which we regard objectively as occurring more or less independently of ourselves in the world around us, as by those events which articulate themselves in our experience by the reactions they evoke in us. I should add that the reactions in question, however specialized, however localized in the organism, are reactions which concern the organism as a whole.<sup>1</sup> They are its diversified responses to the infinitely diversified situations in which it finds itself placed. In a word, they are episodes in its life ; and one episode is related to another by the same process whereby the life of the psycho-physical organism sustains itself in a succession of well-defined reactions

<sup>1</sup> The use of the word 'reaction' must not be taken to imply anything of a purely physiological nature. It is not of sensori-motor arcs or of reaction-time that I am thinking. The adjustments referred to are adjustments of the total self, and they assume the form of actual experience. The momentary events which are the units in such experience are the shortest events which can be experienced as an experience of the self.

or adjustments. Experienced events are the jolts in the smoothly-flowing forward movement of life. They are differentiations which do not break the continuity of the process. Like the waves of the sea, they rise up and subside in a medium that itself remains undivided.

*Each 'Specious Present' is therefore an Episode  
in the Experience of a Self*

The full significance of these statements as an interpretation of experience can be understood only if we remember that all experience is the experience of selves. It is from the standpoint of what it means to be a self that we must view the adjustments of life which follow one another in a series of specious presents. Incidentally it is from the standpoint of what it means to experience such a series of presents that we must view the conception of experience-bearing selfhood.

The experience of which selfhood is a meaning consists in a succession of events, each one of which includes an adjustment of the total organism. Now every call for adjustment implies a certain threatened loss of selfhood, a possible loss which would become actual, were the adjustment not effected. Of course the loss in question need not in many cases be more than a partial impairment. In some cases, however, it may; and in others an accumulation of such impairments may lead to the total disintegration of the organized system which we call the self. This is obviously so of bodily selfhood, where structure and function go together, and where the integrity of the system is maintained by a certain loss and recovery

WHAT RELIGION ADDS TO INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE of equilibrium. But the selfhood of which we are thinking is that more comprehensive selfhood, in which physical and mental factors combine to form the unity of a person. Selfhood in this sense, however, is to be defined not in terms of the unity of the organism, whether physiological or psycho-physical, but in terms of the experience which the psycho-physical organism renders possible, and of which, perhaps, in some of its aspects, it is the phenomenal or objective equivalent. Like existence and life, selfhood is nothing less than experience revealing one of its meanings. What is it that experience reveals the self to be ?

*Experience of Selfhood an Experience into which the Self enters twice, as the Self-adjusting and the Self-adjusted*

In the first place every experience is an experience of time. But we do not experience time as such : every experience of time is an experience of events. Now the events which constitute an experience of time are obviously not events which happen independently of that experience. They are of such a nature that the events themselves and the experience of the events are one and the same. When this is the case, the experience of an event is the experience of a self, and to experience events which are indistinguishable from experience is to experience selfhood.

In the second place the events which constitute an experience of selfhood are of a peculiar nature. They do not merely happen ; for events can happen without constituting an experience. When the events with

which we are dealing happen, they do so in a sense which implies that thereby a present experience has become an experience of the past. But to say that a present *experience* becomes an *experience* of the past is to say that an experience of selfhood is an experience of self-adjustment. This statement must of course be taken in the most comprehensive sense, as applying even to those adjustments which from most points of view would be regarded rather as a failure of adjustment. For even in such cases, so long as experience continues, adjustment of some sort there must be, even if it is no more than the adjustment of the drowning man, who, having failed to grasp the proffered life-line, still continues for some time to meet the conditions required to sustain the experience of living.

Now the adjustment presupposed in every event which is an experience implies a conscious subject—the subject to which we ascribe the experience as an experience of selfhood. But this experience is something more: it is an experience of self-*adjustment*; and this involves an experience of the conditions to which the subject adjusts itself, as well as of the self which adjusts itself to the conditions. More specifically, the experience of self-adjustment, by which, as we have seen, we measure the specious present, and which is identical with the process whereby the present becomes the past, is an experience into which the self enters twice, as the self-*adjusting* and the self-*adjusted*. Between these two there is the process of adjustment, which involves other factors than the self—a process which begins in a certain displacement of experiential elements, calling for a move on the part of the self in the interests of its integrity,

and which ends in a sense of selfhood restored and stabilized under a new set of conditions. By this means the self maintains its identity in a world that is not all self; and the span of the specious present is best indicated in actual experience by the distance from self to self—the time required for a single act of balance in a disturbing universe. Every such act constitutes what I shall call a *reaction*.<sup>1</sup>

*The Experiences of Selfhood are Episodes in which the Self corrects and epitomizes a well-defined Series of Reactions*

Now life in the sense of Zoë, life as experienced, is an affair of reactions; but it is so in a sense that must be carefully defined. When we are said to experience life, we experience not only the reactions as such, but also their succession. The same fusion of past and future in a specious present, which constitutes a reaction in human experience, must, therefore, be thought of as the principle that enables us to experience the succession of one reaction upon another. We do not pass through the successive reactions that constitute the content of life, as the hand of a clock passes successively over the figures on the dial. We also *experience* what it is to pass from one such reaction to another, and to pass through a regular series of reactions.

<sup>1</sup> As regards the relation between the meaning of the word 'reaction' as here employed and the more usual meaning, it should be noted that special physiological adjustment, involving a more or less isolated mechanism, becomes an adjustment of the total self when it is actually experienced. In some cases a variety of physiological or psycho-physical adjustments will coalesce in a single experienced reaction of the self.

Furthermore, the succession of reactions is not a smooth-flowing process. There is more in it than succession. For as the individual reactions articulate themselves successively as the smallest events involving a distinct experience of self-equilibration, they come together in combinations which we also experience as such, and which constitute a similar succession of larger experience-events. These larger events, which I shall designate episodes, in contradistinction to reactions, are in some ways analogous to, in some ways different in nature from, the smaller events which they include. They differ from individual reactions in so far as they represent a final *readjustment* whereby the self seeks to correct and to epitomize a well-defined series of its own reactions. As experiences, they express the difference that it makes to the self to have experienced not merely one event, with the fusion of past and future which one event implies, but a succession of events, and the fusion of one event with another implied in the fact of their succession.

The added elements of experience implied in the experience of an episode have to do with the fact that the self not merely reacts, but diversifies its reactions, and that the transition from one reaction, one experienced event, to another, is itself an event, an articulation of experience.

Thus experience as a whole, by the insertion of its intercalary processes, acquires a completeness of characterization otherwise impossible. But more important still is the fact that the modes in which the self diversifies its reactions constitute a systematic and sustained expression of the unity and identity of selfhood, and that the experiences which go with a

systematically diversified set of reactions form a well-defined block of experience—namely, the episode.

In conclusion it must be pointed out that an episode, in so far as it is experienced as such, is not the mere succession of experience-events : it is no abstract series or totality. Rather, from the standpoint of an experienced episode, the constituent events are mere phases in a single experience. They are the little waves upon the bigger waves of life, and obviously the big wave is more than a summation of the smaller. Thus in the experience of reading an exciting narrative each incident evokes its own reaction ; but the experience of reading the tale to an end is not the mere succession of these thrills. It is the experience of something more comprehensive, and is consequently a more comprehensive experience, in the light of which the individual passages become, as we say, mere incidents. In relation to experience in this aspect, selfhood might be defined as a general capacity for comprehensive experiences.

*Life as a Whole not experienced as Episodes are*

So far, it will be observed, we have been drawing out the implications of life in the sense of Zoë—experienced living. And now the question arises : If the actual experience of an episode is more than the sequent experience of its constituent events, are we to extend this line of reasoning to life as a whole, and assert that the experience of life is more than the sequent experience of its constituent episodes ? One is tempted to reply in the affirmative, on the ground that there seem to be as good reasons for the latter assertion as there are for the former. But on further

reflection it will be seen that there is no real parity between the two cases. The experience of an episode has something cumulative in it, and it is only when the episode is complete, and the series of our diversified reactions has assumed the features of a single sustained policy or characteristic attitude to a typical situation, that we can be said actually to *experience* the episode as such. We do not really experience an episode until the episode reports itself to us, in an actual experience, as complete. By the same reasoning we should have to assume that if there is such a thing as a comprehensive experience of life, an experience of life as such and in its completeness, life itself is able to report to us the fact of its completion, and that in the form of an actual experience. But so far as the conditions of terrestrial existence are concerned, the completion of life appears to be not a new experience added to all others, but the end of all experience whatsoever. If this view must be accepted as final, it follows that there is no such thing as a comprehensive experience of life—in other words, that the meaning of life in its entirety is something which experience is quite unable to reveal. And if life, as was asserted, is experience rendering up one of its meanings, we must add that the meaning in question will be as fragmentary and enigmatic as the experience which reveals it.

*The Relation of 'Life as Bios' to 'Life as Zoë'*

These conclusions, however, it will be seen, are subject to the condition under which they have been stated—the condition, namely, that the life which is identical with experience is limited by the

life of the body on earth, and that the death of the body puts an end to the experience of life—in a word, that life in the sense of *Zoë* is conditioned by life in the sense of *Bios*. This, however, is an assumption that can hardly be allowed to go unexamined; and the examination of it demands a general inquiry into the relations of *Bios* and *Zoë*.

What then are we to understand by the life of the body? As we have seen, there are two senses in which this life can be interpreted. In the first place there is the consistently naturalistic explanation: life is an observable phenomenon of nature. That is to say, it is something which characterizes a certain class of real objects, as these make themselves known to us in the system of their appearances. We experience life, in this sense, in the same way in which we experience the appearances of objects, and the objects of which the appearances are the phenomenal equivalent. From this point of view life does not reveal itself to experience except as an object.

Closely connected with this interpretation is that in which life is recognized as the thing that reveals itself in the *possession and use of a body*, but in which this use and possession are reduced to functions of the body in question. This view need not detain us, as all the problems arising out of it will be solved (in so far as they are soluble at all) in the solution of our more immediate problem—that of relating the conception of life, in the strictly naturalistic sense, to life in the sense of *Zoë*. It might, however, be well to notice in passing that the second interpretation of life represents an attitude which is chiefly practical, the attitude of this-worldliness, which is an idealization of *Bios*; and in justification of it,

it might be said that it is the perfectly reasonable demand for a *phenomenal* or *objective equivalent*.

Let us now close definitely with the problem of showing the relation between life as Zoë and life as Bios. In the first place it must be remarked that life in both senses is a revelation of experience, and both conceptions are, therefore, inevitable and legitimate. Moreover no speculative difficulties arise so long as we confine ourselves to one or the other view. The attempt to reduce both conceptions to that of Bios is the demand that life, as subjectively revealed, should be identified with life as objectively revealed. It requires no more than the bare statement to show the utter impossibility of any such identification. The experience of being alive, whatever it may be, is assuredly not the same thing as the body which we experience as an object; and the logic of the situation demands that if we reduce the former to the latter, we should do so by the simple device of leaving the former absolutely out of account. The behaviouristic position is quite consistent in so far as it implies that if we begin with the observable phenomena, we can never hope to get away from them. It does not follow, however, that because we are unable to trace the conception of life as an experience in the conception of life as an object, the latter conception may not be found to go very naturally with the former. It is certainly a significant fact that the general concept of experience bifurcates into the experience of having an object and that of being a subject, that in all cases the former type of experience implies the latter, and that so far as human experience is concerned, the latter type normally implies the former.

Our problem, therefore, comes to this : Granted

a strictly naturalistic conception of life as an observable object or phenomenon, are there reasons for supposing that such a view can take its place as a legitimate interpretation of life within the limits of a more comprehensive conception based upon the other aspect of experience?

What is a living body, considered as an object of observation? We commonly describe it as an *organism*. Now there is a widely prevalent notion that when we distinguish anything as an organism, we thereby convey the idea that it is not a mechanism. The antithesis between the conceptions of mechanism and organism, which nineteenth-century idealism has done so much to promote, is one of the strange vagaries of human thought. Strictly speaking, the conception of an organism is nothing more than the concrete equivalent of the abstract notion of organization (an organism is an actual organized structure); and so far as I can see, there is nothing in the notion of organization as such which leads beyond the mechanical. If there is anything in the nature of living things that distinguishes them in a fundamental sense from inanimate things, it is that they are alive, and not that they are organized. The mechanistic biology of the present day appears to me to be on safe ground when it maintains that a living body can be an organism without thereby ceasing to be a mechanism. And assuredly when we consider it from the strictly scientific standpoint as an object of observation, the body is no more than this. For what we can observe in it is only an actually existing content of space and time, defining what we call its life by a series of movements within the limited system of relations that constitute its

environment. It is true that, as has been already pointed out, we can hardly assume the biological point of view without attributing selfhood to the organism; but the selfhood in question is that of the object-self, rather than the subject-self; and so far the organism does not differ from the object-selves which we classify as inorganic.

Up to the present, the argument seems to be altogether in favour of a mechanistic biology. But it is difficult to advance beyond this point without a subtle infusion of ideas derived not from the phenomenalist and objective view of nature (which is identical with the mechanistic), but from the view which has its origin in the subjective aspects of experience. For example, the biologist finds it very hard to adhere strictly to his idea of organization as such, and to exclude from his mind a certain cunning suggestion of life as something added to matter when matter becomes organized beyond a certain point. This covert assumption is perhaps to some degree the result of continuing to think and speak of *life* after the concept has been absorbed in the concept of organism. What is not fully realized is that once the conception of organism has been invoked as a substitute for life, it is of the utmost importance to banish the conception of life altogether. And if this is considered too drastic a procedure, it can only be on the ground that there is something in what we call life that does not admit of exhaustive treatment upon a basis of pure observation, something which even in its most exclusively objective aspects requires the fine touches of interpretative insight which come, not from the unchastened imagination, or from ethical prejudice,

but from experience on its subjective side—the experience, not of what a living thing looks like, but of what it feels to be a living thing.

Take, for example, the view that life is a phenomenon of organization, or something which organization explains. The statement implies that there is at least sufficient difference between the conception of organization and the conception of life to entitle us to regard the one as a cause and the other as an effect. The suggestion is that life is the phenomenon to be explained, and organization the explanation of it. But the proposition either begs the question by reading life into organization, or else there is hardly a shred of evidence for it. This will become clear if we regard the question from the standpoint of each of the two crucial problems involved—the problem of the origin of life and that of the nature of death.

First, then, what do we know of the origin of life? What are the available facts? If we accept the view under examination, we shall have to say that life is a product of organization. But can it be claimed for such an assertion that it expresses an observable or veritable fact? If so, then it must be possible to discriminate between our observation of matter as sufficiently organized to *produce* the phenomenon of life, and the life which supervenes upon the organization of matter.<sup>1</sup> Such a discrimination is of

<sup>1</sup> I do not mean that there must necessarily be a temporal difference between the two phenomena, although this would normally, if not invariably, be the case where the relationship is one of cause and effect. Obviously in the present instance there can be no such difference. We do not observe a state in which matter appears completely organized, as it is in living bodies, but without the characteristic phenomena of life, followed by a second state in which these phenomena and nothing more are added to the first. Apart altogether from the question of

course possible in the abstract, but not as a matter of actual observation. What we observe is a chemically organized system in motion ; but the description of the phenomenon does not explain its origin. A strict adherence to the facts, therefore, does not permit us to say that life is a *product* of organization. And if there were no facts available, except such as are implied in the organized structure of living things, we should have no data at all upon the origin of life.

*Organization a Phenomenon of Life, not Life of Organization ; Death not an Effect of Dissolution of the Body*

But as it happens, there is one remarkable fact, the object of numberless empirical observations, which represents a very real piece of information on the subject—the fact, namely, that life is propagated by life. The meaning of this assertion is that when a new living body, a new unit of life, makes its appearance, it does so under conditions which presuppose the prior existence not only of organized matter, but of organized matter having the properties of life. In so far, then, as from the strictly empirical standpoint of biological observation, we are entitled to distinguish at all between organization and life (a doubtful assumption), a strict adherence to the known facts would point to the conclusion, not that life is a phenomenon of organization, but that organization of a certain order is a phenomenon of life. At the most we are hardly entitled to assert more than temporal priority and sequence, the view we are examining would require the assumption of a certain ontological difference between fully organized matter and living matter. But this is a difference which finds no support in the facts as actually observed.

the bare fact that organization and life accompany one another.<sup>1</sup>

A similar conclusion would seem to follow from an analysis of the phenomenon of death. If life is a product of organization (the organization of the living body) death obviously will be a result of the disorganization or disintegration of the same living body. But this statement is an inversion of the facts, so far as these are known. The phenomenon which we call death is neither definable as the dissolution of the body, nor is it an *effect* of such dissolution. Rather the dissolution of the body is a consequence of death.

Biologically speaking, the fact of death is somewhat of an anomaly. Although the processes which precede it may be slow and gradual, the phenomenon itself is in the nature of a catastrophic stroke. Moreover the precedent processes, while they make for death, go on within the living structure. In a sense, therefore, they are phenomena of life. Again, if we consider death from the standpoint of evolution,

<sup>1</sup> These remarks need not be taken as prejudging the question as to abiogenesis. This is a question for the biologist and not for the philosopher. It is true that the great mass of evidence so far is against the hypothesis. But my colleague Professor E. G. Conklin has been good enough to point out to me certain border-line instances of life that may be taken as furnishing a presumption in favour of the view that life derives its origin through organization from inorganic matter. Even so, however, my argument would not be in any way impaired. For if the theory of abiogenesis could be experimentally proved, it would only strengthen my contention that so long as we treat life strictly as a phenomenon of observation, we have no right to interpret it as implying anything but the organization of matter. The empirical demonstration of abiogenesis would really be no more than an addition to the mass of observable facts concerning living (that is to say, *organized*) bodies. It would add nothing to our knowledge of what life is, and would have no effect whatever on the possibility of interpreting it, not as an observable phenomenon, but as the actual experience of being alive.

another paradox makes its appearance. We usually think of evolution in connection with life. It is life, we say, that evolves; or life is a product of evolution; and these two statements look like two ways of saying the same thing. As a matter of fact to say that life evolves is by no means to say that it is a *product* of evolution. So far as biological evolution is concerned, the truth is rather that evolution is a phenomenon of life. But the thing which, it seems, we cannot say about life is a thing which we can and must in a sense say of death. For death makes its appearance as a natural event only when evolution has produced structures sufficiently complex to die a natural death. The simplest forms of life, unicellular organisms, do not die of their own accord: they divide and multiply.<sup>1</sup> It would appear, therefore, that

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* Raymond Pearl, *The Biology of Death*, 1922. The following passages are worth quoting. "*Life itself is a continuum*. A break or discontinuity in its progression has never occurred since its first appearance. Discontinuity of existence appertains not to life, but only to one part of the make-up of a portion of one large class of living things. This is certain, from the facts already presented. Natural death is a new thing which has appeared in the course of evolution, and its appearance is concomitant with, and evidently in a broad sense, caused by that relatively early evolutionary specialization which set apart and differentiated certain cells of the organism for the exclusive business of carrying on all functions of the body other than reproduction. We are able to free ourselves, once and for all, of the notion that death is a necessary attribute or inevitable consequence of life. It is nothing of the sort. Life can and does all the time go on without death. The somatic death of higher multicellular organisms is simply the price they pay for the privilege of enjoying those higher specializations of structure and function which have been added on as a side line to the main business of living things, which is to pass on in unbroken continuity the never-dimmed fire of life itself" (p. 42). "The discontinuity of death is not a necessary or inherent adjunct or consequence of life, but is a relatively new phenomenon, which appeared only when and because differentiation of structure and function appeared in the course of evolution. Death necessarily occurs only in such somata of multicellular organisms as have lost, through differentiation and specialization of function, the power of reproducing each part

death is a product of evolution, but if so it is a product of the process whereby life perfects itself by becoming at once more comprehensive and more highly specialized.

In considering this aspect of the subject, it is important to notice that the organization which is a universal phenomenon of life occurs in two closely related, yet profoundly different forms. First there is the organization of the individual cells as such. This organization is a characteristic of all cell-life, whether the cells in question be germ-cells or somatic cells, whether they be the cells that constitute the bodies of unicellular organisms or those that enter into the complex bodily structures of the metazoa. In the second place there is the organization of the individual cells into the bodies of multicellular organisms.

Now the difference between the fact of life and the phenomenon of death, so far as the question of organization enters into the explanation of each, turns precisely upon this circumstance, that there is nothing in the life-history of the unicellular organism which causes it to lose its identity as an organized system, and cease to be, whereas in the course of nature something invariably happens to the body of a multicellular organism, which has just this effect. Death therefore is something that happens to the organized bodies of the metazoa. To the question : What is it that brings it about ? science is not yet in a position to give a clear and unambiguous answer. But in a quite general way we see that when death occurs, the reason is that the body is no if it, for any accidental reason, breaks down or is injured ; or still possessing such power in their cells, have lost the necessary mechanism for separating a part of the soma from the rest for purposes of agamic reproduction " (pp. 48-49).

longer able to function as a metabolic unity.<sup>1</sup> Why is this ?

*Senescence a Phenomenon of Life, not of Death*

The answer is contained in that class of phenomena which we summarize in the term senescence. But senescence is a very vague term. The gross features of the phenomenon are familiar enough, the stoop of age, the shrinkage of the frame, gray hairs and wrinkles, the loss of weight in the skeletal system, the decay of the powers, bodily and mental. The question that concerns us is whether, taking the phenomenon as a whole, we can reduce it to certain changes in the cell-units of the body, progressively unfitting them to cooperate in the general metabolism of the system ; or whether these changes do not themselves imply senescence as their cause. A study of minute structure has revealed certain definitely identifiable differences, for instance, between the cells of a newly born child and a man dying of old age. In the cells of the spinal ganglion there is a loss due to age, in the volume of the nucleus and in the number of visible nucleoli ; as well as a great increase in pigmentation.<sup>2</sup> The bent posture " means an

<sup>1</sup> " Somatic death results from an organic dis-harmony of the whole organism, initiated by the failure of some organ or part to continue in its normal harmonious functioning in the entire differentiated and mutually dependent system." Raymond Pearl, *op. cit.* p. 49. " In the body any part is dependent for the necessities of its existence, as for example nutritive material, upon other parts, or put in another way, upon the organization of the body as a whole. It is the differentiation and specialization of function of the mutually dependent aggregate of cells and tissues which constitute the metazoan body which brings about death, and not any inherent or inevitable mortal process in the individual cells themselves." *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* the statistical table in the work referred to, p. 28.

WHAT RELIGION ADDS TO INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE altered position and fusion of the elements of the vertebral column.”<sup>1</sup> On the whole question Professor Conklin writes :

“ By all odds the most important structural peculiarity of senescence is the increase of metaplastasm or differentiation products at the expense of the general protoplasm. This change of general protoplasm into products of differentiation and of metabolism is an essential feature of embryonic differentiation and it continues in many types of cells until the entire cell is almost filled with such products. Since nuclei depend upon the general protoplasm for their growth, they also become small in such cells. If this process of the transformation of protoplasm into differentiation products continues long enough it necessarily leads to the death of the cell, since the continued life of the cell depends upon the interaction between the general protoplasm and the nucleus. In cells laden with the products of differentiation, the power of regulation is first lost, then the power of division, and finally the power of assimilation ; and this is normally followed by the senescence and death of the cells.”<sup>2</sup>

It will be observed that the one large fact which emerges from these explanations is that the degeneration of the somatic cells occurs only when the cells are organized in complex bodily structures. This degeneration is an incident in the process whereby living matter assumes and maintains a differentiated form. Left to itself, an individual cell manifests no tendency to the degenerative processes that result

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 27.      <sup>2</sup> Quoted by Raymond Pearl, *ibid.* pp. 29-30.

in death.<sup>1</sup> It would seem to be a fair inference, therefore, that death, whatever its histological accompaniments, is a phenomenon of organization on the somatic, rather than on the cellular, scale. A phenomenon, be it noted, of *organization*, and not of disorganization! For the cellular changes which accompany, and, it may be, constitute senescence,<sup>2</sup> are changes which go on in *living cells*, and characterize the life of these cells so long as they form part of an organized, living body.

What we call senescence is then a phenomenon of life and not of death. Hence the processes which lead to death are processes which not only presuppose a living structure, but express the normal history of vital function. Death, we are forced to conclude, is a normal function of life, when life itself becomes the function of an organized system of cells. This assertion obviously applies only to somatic death. A complete statement, which would distinguish between somatic and cellular life, as well as between somatic and cellular death, would include a further assertion to the effect that the death of the cell is a function, not of the life of the cell, but of the *death of the body* in which the cell occurs as a unit of organization.

It will be seen then that from the biological point of view both life and death occur in two forms. Now what is most important from the standpoint of our problem is the fact that life as *Zoë*, the experience

<sup>1</sup> Individual somatic cells can be kept alive indefinitely when detached from the body of which they formed a part. *Vide* an account of the work and conclusions of Carrel and Loeb in Raymond Pearl, ch. ii, "Conditions of Cellular Immortality."

<sup>2</sup> "Many of these manifestations which have been regarded as causes of senescence, may more truly be considered concomitant attributes of senescence." *Ibid.* p. 49.

WHAT RELIGION ADDS TO INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE of life, at least in any developed sense, goes only with one of these forms—that, namely, which in the course of nature invariably terminates in death.<sup>1</sup> The death of the body therefore relates itself not only to somatic life, but to the actual experience of living which goes with the latter. Does this imply that bodily death is a function of life *as we experience it*? Is the fact of death, like the fact of life, experience itself revealing one of its meanings? And if so, how do we experience death—as a fact or as a mode of existence? So long as we confine ourselves to the biological point of view, it would seem that death can be no more than a *fact* of experience; but may it not be that just as the observable life of the body has an inner analogue in the actual experience of what it is to be alive, so the death of the body may have an inner analogue in the experience of what it is to have died? If this is granted as a theoretical possibility (and, so far as biology is concerned, it can be no more, if it is even that), then, since we cannot have any experience whatever without existing, it follows that death, when viewed on its inner side, may turn out to be an experience of life.

*Again the Question : Is the Death of the Body  
the End of Life ?*

Returning now to the question raised some time back, we must ask again : In view of the various

<sup>1</sup> This statement does not commit us to any special view on the question whether the lower organisms are conscious. Even if they are, their *experience* of life will presumably be of a rudimentary order—an experience from which most of the significant features in *our* experience of what life means will be wanting. On this question *vide* H. S. Jennings, *Behaviour of the Lower Organisms*, ch. xx.

aspects of the case that have been brought to light, is the death of the body the end of life? One thing can be confidently asserted. The existence of an organized body, known through our objective observation of it, is not all that we *mean* by life. So far as the logic of the argument is concerned, we have no right to say that life cannot exist and be experienced as such in the absence of an organized body. That it does exist in the absence of the soma is a fact that has been sufficiently emphasized, but when we think of survival after death, it is not the life of the detached cell that we have in mind. It is a life of experience such as we naturally associate with the complex bodily structure, and not with the cell. Our question therefore has to do with the possibility of a prolonged experience such as usually goes with a body, after the body has ceased to exist.

So far as the biological aspect of the case is concerned, it would be a thoroughly unwarranted procedure to conclude, on the strength of certain negative and purely formal considerations, that survival after death is even remotely probable. If there is any *fact* of experience which is substantiated by the sustained and massive experience of mankind, it is that however obscure the connection may be between the consciousness of living and the existence of an organized body, there is a profound and universal integration. In view of this fact there is only one way left in which we can reopen our question with any hope of success. Since we are precluded from attributing the life which we actually experience to the body, as an effect to a cause, we must ask whether the undoubted integration of the two may not be explained in some other way.

Now to this question there is a fairly obvious answer, an answer, moreover, which is no more than a statement of what we know to be a fact of experience. The experience of life and the existence of an organized body are found by observation to coincide in such a way that when the experience of life *occurs*, a body is *observed* to exist. In other words, the existence of a body is one of the things which we experience, when we experience what it is to be alive. The only reasonable construction which can be placed upon this coincidence is that the body is, to use a phrase which has served our purpose before, the phenomenal or objective equivalent of life as subjectively experienced. Life, so to speak, *reports itself* to us in various forms, and among these is the form of bodily existence. It never *defines itself* as the existence of an organized physical structure ; and the attempt to find in the latter the sole meaning of life has been shown to be completely unsuccessful.

Such being the case, we are able to formulate at least one hypothetical proposition about the possibility of survival. If life persists after the death of the body, it is to be presumed that it will still take the form of an experience of living, and that this experience will be accompanied by some objective counterpart—that, in a word, the objective equivalent will be in some way forthcoming. We may further assume that if a future life is vouchsafed us, the objective equivalent will be commensurate with the meaning of that new life of which it is the outward manifestation. This, it will be observed, is precisely the view of Christian theology, with its doctrine of a spiritual or resurrection body.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is pleasing to note the decent and conscious obscurity in which

*Again the Question : Can there be a Comprehensive Experience of Life as a Whole?*

The argument now reverts to the point where we left it when the question was raised whether there is such a thing as a comprehensive experience of life as a whole. It will be remembered that the problem of a life eternal is bound up with this question. The exact position of the inquiry may be stated as follows. If there is such a thing as a comprehensive experience of life, an experience of life as something more than its successive episodes, this can only mean that human existence in its entirety, considered as the progress of a self between the birth and death of the body, can be made to appear as nothing but a phase or episode in some deeper current of life. To experience something of the movement of this deeper current would be to experience a life in which the life on earth would be comprehended as a single experience. And if this were possible, a further possibility would go with it—the possibility, namely, that death would appear, not as the end of all experience, but as itself an experience or episode in a larger life.

The question, therefore, is whether there is anything in the actual experience of life which suggests that life as we know it here and now is only a fragment of a greater whole. The answer will depend upon a more searching analysis of experience than

St. Paul leaves the question of the precise nature of the resurrection body (1 Corinthians xv, 35-57). This is in striking contrast to the futile and indecent attempts of subsequent theology to particularize. The absurdities to which such attempts gave rise are found lingering on in the history of philosophy as far down as Locke's controversy with Stillingfleet.

has yet been attempted, and will turn specifically upon what experience has to tell us of the deeper meaning of selfhood.

We have seen that all our experience of the objective world of space and time, our experience of phenomena, of real things and of events, implies an experience of what it means to be a subject. Furthermore we have seen that our experience of time unfolds itself in a succession of specious presents, which are measurable in terms of individual adjustments or adjustment-events. An adjustment in this sense may be defined as the process whereby a subject blocks out of the indefinite continuum of experience an extensive present, by directing his attention (and perhaps the other energies of its psycho-physical nature) to an objective content, from the point at which that content is experienced as imminent, to the point at which it is first experienced as past. An adjustment-event is either the adjustment itself, or the objective content viewed from the standpoint indicated in the definition just given. In relation to this process and the way in which it is experienced, the experience of the self is that which is implied in the adjustment as an invariant factor—a factor which, when the adjustment is complete, is seen to be the same as that which initiated the latter. Selfhood-experience is, therefore, the discovery and re-discovery of an identity underlying the fluxes of objective experience, and defining itself against them all, not as an added object, but as a permanent subject. As experience bifurcates, it produces on the one hand an indefinitely varied and perpetually changing manifold, in which certain phenomenal contents are found to be the equivalents of others, while on the other hand it continues to

repeat itself by guaranteeing an existence which is not the equivalent of any other, but which throughout all changes remains constant with itself. This identity of selfhood may be said to be actually experienced in the sense that every experience, whatever its objective content, comes to us as an experience of the self. So uniform is this feature in our experience, that we feel ourselves to be the universal and uniform subject of every object and every event that falls within our cognizance. We learn to think of ourselves as inviolably self-identical, and to define our unassailable individuality against the obscure and obviously dissoluble unity of objects, in the unique concept of personality.

*Whether the Conditions of the Existence of  
Personality are all External*

Now the problem of continued existence, whether in this life or after death, assumes a peculiar form, when existence is brought into relationship with this concept—when the existence in question is that of persons. The relationship might be expressed as follows. We do not think (and with our thinking go hopes and fears) that so long as we exist, it is possible that we should ever cease to be persons ; but we do frequently fear that with the death of the body we shall cease to exist. That is to say, we are accustomed to subordinate the conception of personal existence to the conception of existence in general, in such a way that the former is made to depend on conditions having nothing to do with personality as such. Or, looking at the subject from the standpoint of the different types of experience involved, we interpret

the inner experience of selfhood, the experience of what it is to be a self, as subsidiary to certain factors which we apprehend objectively as an external or phenomenal equivalent of the latter.

The conception of eternal life involves a direct inversion of this position. To put the matter hypothetically, we are asked to assume that personality has something in it which enables it not only to exist under conditions provided from without, but to supply the conditions of existence from its internal resources; and we are asked to understand this assumption in a sense which implies that the existence guaranteed by personality is of such a nature that it is not threatened by the catastrophic stroke of death.

*The Sources to which we must look for an Answer*

The argument therefore turns upon the concept of personality. Eternal life is a possible implication of personal existence, depending upon the extent to which the conditions that render existence not only possible but necessary, are identical with the conditions which render it personal. A belief in immortality is a belief in selfhood and in the ontological possibilities bound up with the experience of what it is to be a self. Assuming these notions as theoretically possible, the first step in the experience of a life which is *eternal* would be the adequate experience of a life which is *internal*. It is to this latter life alone that the concept has any application. To believe in the possibility of eternal life is to believe that life in the end defines itself in terms of an experience which is more comprehensive than any

possible *content* of experience ; and that, therefore, since the life of the body, which is a thing of episodes, is unable to express what living means, the death of the body cannot be assumed to destroy the experience of living. Whether we shall believe in a possible after-life is thus seen to depend on what it is in which we find the meaning of life here and now.

The question comes to this. Is it possible that an *internal* experience of life should *mean* the same thing as a *completely comprehensive* experience—an experience which would comprehend life and death, in the ordinary sense, as any specious present comprehends a *little* past and a *little* future, or as any episode comprehends its constituent events? Is it possible that the internality of self-experience should *connote* the comprehensiveness of an experience in which life and death would be reduced to the scale of episodes? And finally, is it possible to obtain such an experience under the conditions of an unfinished terrestrial existence?

These are questions to which, as they have just been formulated, it would be presumptuous to attempt a reply along abstract metaphysical lines. As the problems involved are in each case problems of experience, experience alone can furnish the answer. But there is a point of view from which the issue may be restated with some prospect of a solution. If it is too much to expect a reasoned demonstration of immortality, it is not unreasonable to ask whether we may not have a *good right to believe* in a future life. For the right to believe is not dependent upon the existence of an irrefragable metaphysical proof. Such proofs in any case have usually very

WHAT RELIGION ADDS TO INTROVERTED VIEW OF LIFE  
little to do with our fundamental beliefs. What we believe we believe because experience tells us that it *is* or that it *must be* so.

Now when the issue is placed upon a basis of experience, the question of immortality inevitably connects with another question—that of God's existence and nature. This too is a question of experience, and the total issue may be stated thus: the hope of immortality is a part of our experience of God; religion represents eternal life as the gift of God to man. Allowing for whatever is anthropomorphic in its expression, we may state the proposition in other terms. From the standpoint of religion, immortality is something which follows from the fact that the supreme reality is personal in character, and from the further fact that subject-selves enter into personal relations with the Supreme Being in a way which guarantees to them a mode and a continuity of existence without an analogue in the world of appearances and of object-selves. Our final problem, therefore, has to do with the personality of God.

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE INTROVERTED VIEW OF NATURE

#### *Difficulties in the Way of conceiving the Author of Nature as a Person*

IN an earlier age, even after reflection had been at work upon religion, it was comparatively easy for men to think of God as a person. In so doing they were merely following the natural bent of their minds as determined by the impetus given to human thought by its animistic beginnings. The conception of the strictly impersonal is a late product of reason, and one which it is very difficult to apply consistently to the world of experience. Even at the present day scientific thinking in certain fields shows lingering traces of a personalist view of nature, and our unscientific thinking about nature is cast in a mould, and expressed in a language, that is all but meaningless except on assumptions derived originally from animistic and quasi-animistic sources.

On the other hand the very fact that the impersonal point of view was so hard to win has produced a certain more or less conscious determination on the part of thinking men to see that it is not lightly violated. Impersonalism has become the subject of a defence-reaction, more particularly in the sphere of higher reflection. When we are dealing with the fundamental issues of life it has become the prejudice of our minds (an acquired prejudice) to seek,

whenever possible, an impersonal rather than a personalist explanation; and this bias in the modern attitude has been greatly reinforced by the new picture of nature and the new magnitudes which scientific knowledge has substituted for the old.

So long as the known and organized part of the universe—what the Greeks called the ‘cosmos’ and what we call the ‘world’—was still conceived as a relatively little thing, so long as the inexhaustible complexity of the world itself, and of its minutest parts, was undivined, the religious consciousness was able to sustain the thought of an omnipresent personal God, even after the drift toward the impersonal had definitely set in.<sup>1</sup>

As a matter of fact the *vastness* of the physical world tended, up to a certain point, to lend impressiveness to a personalist theism. For God, even if he is a person, may, and obviously must, be conceived as *great*. He is the mighty Person, commensurate with nature’s greatness. Hence the part played in Hebrew theism by the spectacle of a heaven and earth which were His handiwork. But when the idea of vastness gave place to the idea of *immensity*, a very real difficulty arose—the difficulty of extending God’s personality to an infinitude of space and time. The idea of a *great* person is obviously easier than that of an infinite one.

Strictly speaking, it was not until the scientific Renaissance that the immensity of nature began to make its impressiveness fully felt. Not that the idea of a spatial infinite was in any way strange or unfamiliar. The idea is one which played a considerable

<sup>1</sup> As we have seen, the impersonalist movement in religion has its origin in other than cosmological considerations. Cf. above, p. 2 *sq.*

rôle in pre-Socratic philosophy and in subsequent times, but on the whole without seriously disturbing man's sense of the commensurateness of the earth with the larger spaces of the cosmos. The reason for this is that in these earlier times the actual size of the cosmos was not suspected, and the infinite that lay outside was on the whole too empty and meaningless to play a very active part in man's interpretation of existence. Generally speaking, the earth was still felt to be a very large and important item in the cosmic system. When it came to be generally realized how tiny a thing it was, and when the world—ὁ κόσμος—began to enlarge its bounds until it became practically coincident with the universe—τὸ πᾶν—the result was bound to be a disturbing sense of the insignificance of human life and of all the categories, personality included, which serve as principles of interpretation.

*Dualism in its Rationalist Form : Phenomenalism  
in its Empiricist Form*

At the beginning of modern philosophy the emphasis laid upon space was destined to bear unmistakable fruit, first in the precise form of that dualism which marks the rationalistic philosophy of the Cartesians, and later in the peculiar view of experience which turned empiricism into something very closely approximating to phenomenalism. In the initial phase the characteristic problem is that of relating the conscious subject to an objective world of extension. The result of formulating the problem in these terms is that the experience of the subject is interpreted primarily in the sense of what it means

to have an object. The objective factor thus acquires a preponderating importance. In a sense it is counted in twice, first as the actually existing real object, and secondly as the object of consciousness. In correcting this pleonasm Berkeley strikes out the independent Real, but leaves the object of consciousness as the definitory factor in human experience. To have experience is to have an object. Hume is quick to grasp the implications of this view. If to have experience is always to be conscious of an object, then there is no place for a subject in experience. The subject dissolves into the manifold of experienced contents which are neither subjects nor objects, but the contents of an experience which is conceived from a purely naturalistic point of view, as consisting of its own contents.

Looked at in another way, the relation of naturalism and rationalism might be expressed as follows. Rationalism is the attempt to effect a combination of subject and object *synthetically*, by discovering some principle which is common to both, and in its completeness higher than either. This principle is Reason, which expresses at once the essential nature of the subject and that of the object. Thus mathematics becomes the type of true knowledge, reflecting the essential character of the external world as well as of mind. The subject is defined as a thinking rather than as a sentient being, and the object is interpreted in terms of its mathematical rather than of its sensory qualities. Naturally the very presence of these qualities and of the sentient element is a disconcerting fact for Rationalism, and all the main difficulties of the doctrine centre round these features.

Naturalism seeks to solve the problem of dualism

by *analysis* of the experience within which the distinction of subject and object falls ; and its method is to show that when we reach the elements of experience the distinction has disappeared. In place of a thinking substance and a material substance, the object of thought, we have a manifold of atomic object-states, which may be described indifferently as subjective or objective, because they are neither the one nor the other except by convention. The way is thus open for the reduction of everything to a dead level of natural fact. Man is no exception to nature ; he is merely a particular combination of nature's units. From the standpoint of Naturalism, modern philosophy, in beginning with dualism, makes a false start. The problem of dualism is therefore, it holds, a false and artificial problem, and the synthetic solution a false and artificial solution. Thus we may define the two great types of modern philosophy, with reference to their respective conclusions, by saying that the Rationalist imagines he has disposed of a problem by *solving* it, whereas the Naturalist contents himself with showing that the problem does not exist.

*Both take the ' Cinematographic ' View of Experience, and relate God to Nature Mechanically*

Throughout these movements of thought the ' cinematographic ' view of experience goes hand in hand with the cinematographic view of nature. In the one case the unit of interpretation is an object presented to observation, as in the other it is a distribution of the contents of space. The transition from one object to another, whereby the transformation series is established as an elementary fact of

experience, is not taken seriously. In place of this we have various highly artificial and unconvincing ways of dealing with the orderly sequence of nature's events. Among these is one which specially concerns us—the conception of nature as a divine language whereby God, in the interest of our preservation and well-being, sees to it that our impressions of sense occur in certain orderly sequences. This piece of philosophical crudity is only one manifestation of the general tendency, fostered by the subject-object interpretation of experience, to approach the divine being by cosmological routes. Hence the brood of arguments, so characteristic of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to establish God's existence and providence by relating Him, more or less mechanically, to nature.

*The Alternative View of Experience, as the Experience of being Persons: here must lie the Revelation of God*

From all such attempts, fallacious in themselves and barren in religious results, we turn to another point of view, from which the divine being reveals Himself in human experience, but only in that aspect of experience which implies that there is more in it than the relation of subject to object. Without denying that it is natural and proper to seek for evidences of God in the orderliness and harmony of nature, I venture to suggest that we cannot do so with any hope of success, until we have learned to interpret our experience of nature as a whole in the light of our experience of subject-selfhood. Until this has been done, until we have come to see that

there is an inner meaning in the experience which so frequently comes to us in the form of appearances and objects of observation, we are not in a position to read the book of nature as a revelation of the Divine. The progressive discovery of order in the world of physical objects and events does not of itself necessarily imply the existence of an omnipresent Intelligence. The more logical conclusion would be that as the scientific hypotheses and methods whereby this order is revealed take no account of an over-ruling Providence, the order of nature is an order whose laws are her own, and not the laws of God. Thus every advance in our knowledge of nature as a system of laws would confirm us in our impression of her as an autonomous and self-contained system. That it is possible in some instances for the man of science to regard his discoveries as pointing to a divine ordinance and a divine ordainer is due to the fact that in passing from nature to God he virtually (and perhaps without realizing it) changes his point of view by changing his attitude to experience itself. It is with this change that we have now to deal.

The question before us is the question what conclusions as to the interpretation of experience in general, whether on its subjective or its objective side, must be deduced from the fact that all human experience is the experience of persons—that is to say of conscious subject-selves.

### *Certain definitory Characteristics of Personality*

I shall begin by laying down certain propositions, which follow from our analysis of relations, and

which will serve the purpose of indicating certain *definitory characteristics* of personality. (1) In the first place not merely do relations exist *between* persons and other entities, as relations exist between the units in a physical system: they also exist *for* persons, and therefore in a fundamentally different sense from that in which relations exist *as such*. In a word, they exist (or may exist) for a person as objects exist for a subject. (2) Among the objects that exist for persons are *other persons*, or at least aspects of persons. (3) Finally, and most important of all, while in a sense one person may exist as the object of another person, no person *as such* can exist for another *merely as an object*, and to treat a person as an object is to fail to do justice to his nature—a failure which is fraught with the most serious consequences for religion and for human life in general. It is a distinguishing characteristic of persons that other persons can and should exist for them not as objects but as subjects.

### *The Four possible Personal Attitudes*

Let us now proceed to relate these propositions to the concept of morality considered, from our point of view, as the practical content of religion.

There are two possible attitudes on the part of a person which are fundamentally opposed to the postulates both of religion and of morality. (1) Persons may treat *subjects as objects*. This attitude is at the bottom of all the ideas implicit in a naturalistic ethics and theology;<sup>1</sup> and its logical outcome

<sup>1</sup> In justice to the ethical naturalist it should be said that he does not consciously discriminate in favour of *himself* as a subject, and

is either atheism or an objective type of pantheism—that is, the view which regards God as a universal object within which all other objects fall as parts. (2) Persons may treat *objects as subjects*. This second attitude is responsible for all the crudities of animism and anthropomorphism, as well as for all forms of pagan idolatry. In its higher development it leads to the mystical doctrine of a universal self in which all finite subject-selves, as well as all objects, are lost. Its logical outcome is (to employ a term which Hegel applies to Spinoza's system) acosmism.

To these attitudes we must add two others which are profoundly different in their significance. (3) That to which we have devoted so much attention on account of its peculiar position as logically implied in religion, although it is no part of the specific content of the latter—the secular and scientific attitude to nature, that persons may treat *objects as objects*. (4) The remaining possibility is that upon which religion is founded. Persons may treat *subjects as subjects*—persons as persons. Religion, and more particularly the Christian religion, is the progressive unfolding of all that is implied in this attitude. It is the progressive discovery of all that it means, whether in the way of theoretical presupposition or of practical consequence, to treat persons as such. In the last resort, and when the process is carried

against all other persons as his objects. He tries to treat himself from the objective point of view as well. The error of his thinking lies in the fact that he has failed to grasp the fundamental characteristic of personality, whether in himself or in others. There is, however, a practical form of naturalism, which the scientific naturalist would be the first to repudiate, and which consists in virtually acknowledging the demands of subjectivity in oneself and refusing to acknowledge them in all other subjects.

out to its logical conclusions, it means no less than the discovery of a divine Person.

*God's Personality as experienced by Us*

In the previous chapter I pointed out that the question of God's personality is a question of experience. This is a statement that calls for further elucidation. In the first place I do not mean that every man has an experience of God which he recognizes as such. At the same time I do not mean that the experience of God is, or need be, a special kind of experience that is granted only to the favoured few. By man's experience of God I mean something which, like much of his other experience, has in it at once something specific and something universal. It is universal in the sense in which the experience of gravity is a universal experience of mankind, even although there are many men who do not understand what it is they are experiencing when they experience gravity. When the experience of gravity is grasped as it is by the man of science, it is seen to be something that can be experienced in a vague and uncomprehending way. Thus there emerges a specifically scientific experience of gravity, which carries with it a special insight into the meaning of an every-day experience. So it is with the experience of God. It is something which is implied in all experience whatever, in so far as it is the experience of subjects. We may say, therefore, that we cannot be the subject of any experience without experiencing something of God.

*Our Right to Believe in the Existence of God*

It is of course quite possible and quite usual to have experience of God without realizing it. When we do realize that God is implied in any experience, the experience in question begins to assume a specifically religious character. It is from an analysis of experience, therefore, undertaken in the light of the fact that all human experience is the experience of subject-selves, that I hope to show our *right to believe* in God's personal existence. *The argument* is not a logical deduction from given premises, but *an attempt to extort from the actualities of human experience*—the experience of what it is to be a person—*the logic which such experience implies*. More specifically, it is not an attempt to establish a fact upon the evidence of other facts, but to justify a belief on the ground of certain other beliefs which are so completely one with it and with the very texture of experience itself, that we cannot repudiate it or repudiate them without repudiating experience in its most elemental and most universal aspects.

The argument follows two distinct but closely analogous lines of reasoning, each terminating in the conclusion that unless we are prepared to believe in a personal God, we have no right to believe in the existence of any person whatsoever, and have consequently no right to believe that we ourselves are persons. In its first form the argument has to do with the relation of subjects to objects, in its second with the relation of subjects to subjects.

It may be that the method of proof (if it can be so called) will appear a highly illusive and perhaps

sophisticated piece of reasoning. If so, the explanation is possibly to be found in part in a certain artificiality inseparable from any attempt to express in a reasoned statement what can only be brought home to the mind as an actual experience—an experience of the veritable process whereby *experience itself* reveals its supreme meanings. At the conclusion of the formal statement it will therefore be necessary to review the whole subject in a more informal fashion, and in such a way as to bring out the truth that if the existence of a personal God is the necessary implicate of all personal experience, all personal experience must be a revelation of God.

*The Argument from the Relation of Subjects  
to Objects*

First then there is the argument from the relation of subjects to objects. In this connection a subject may be defined as a conscious being aware of an object or of objects. But such an awareness, although it is a condition of personality, does not of itself constitute what we mean by a *person* even in this limited sense. In order that a subject may become a person, we must add to the mere *awareness* of objects the postulate that the objects must constitute an orderly system or cosmos. Such an orderly system we have in the more or less uniform and calculable relations which physics discovers in the world of space-time, and which ordinary experience to some extent reveals in the every-day world of our objective interests. It is this orderliness or uniformity that constitutes the *meaning* of the world for us; and from this point of view Professor Whitehead is right in defining mean-

ing (or, as he calls it, 'significance') as relationship. The world is rich in meaning to the extent to which we can discover orderliness and system in it. To the extent to which we fail in this, it is meaningless, and either a chaos or a blank. Thus the connecting link between personality and the objective world is *meaning*. Persons are not merely the subjects that are aware of objects; they are the subjects to whom the objects of which they are aware have a meaning to convey; and the measure of personality (in this aspect) is the extent to which, for any consciousness, the objective world is invested with such significance. A conscious subject for whom the world has no meaning, or has ceased to have any, is that most tragically enigmatic of all beings, a madman. As such he is no longer treated as a person but only as a phenomenon of nature.<sup>1</sup> Personality, then, is the counterpart, in the world of consciousness and activity, of the fact that there is at least a certain amount of order and meaning in the objective world.

Now human subjects are all limited by an experience which in itself is limited, and which, even within its limits, is very far from being fully intelligible. But to say that persons are limited in this sense is to impose a limit upon personality. It is to reduce human beings, so far, to the level of natural phenomena. Of course this is a conclusion which, from certain points of view, will not be resisted. There is undoubtedly a sense in which we are no more than a part of nature; and there are certain theoretical inquiries, having to do with human

<sup>1</sup> That is to say, personality in this case is resolved into a complex and a sequence of mental states which, in so far as they are related, have meaning for the mind of the trained observer, but none for the subject himself.

nature, which can rest upon no other assumption. Nevertheless it is true that outside the limits of such inquiries, the conclusion to which our argument points is one which men everywhere vehemently resist. The whole of practical life is based on the assumption that in spite of everything that can be said to the contrary, all sane men are persons, and that they are persons in a sense that admits of no qualification. There is therefore a certain incommensurateness between the claim that men everywhere make for themselves, and their ability to substantiate that claim by individual conformity to the condition implied in unqualified personality. It is in this sense that the question before us is a question of right. No man has a right *of his own* to believe himself a person to the extent to which he actually does so. And yet the claim cannot be relinquished without consequences which would prove disastrous, not to religion alone, but to the whole organized life of humanity, to science, art, morality, civilization. If there is anything at all in these institutions, the whole weight of them is behind the individual's claim to unconditional personal existence.

The situation therefore amounts to this. Man does not qualify his claim to personality ; yet the restrictions of his nature do not entitle him to assert it unconditionally. He finds himself divided between two equally irresistible inferences from his own experience of life and of himself. He is and is not altogether a person. The question consequently arises : Is there any way in which he can establish his right to believe what he cannot help believing, although the facts about his nature give the lie to

his conviction? The answer is that personality (if the claim to it is hypothetically granted) carries with it certain new possibilities of experience which effectually remove the disabilities under which the individual labours. Chief among these possibilities is one which has to do with personal relations and with the rationalization of human life which these imply. Thus while to the isolated individual the face of nature may be mostly dark and expressionless, there are other conscious beings in the world along with him, and they may be (and are) so situated that regions and aspects of the objective world, which for him are a chaos and a blank, are for them pregnant with the meanings of an ordered system. Now it is characteristic of persons, however limited, that through the agencies of consciousness, sympathy and understanding, it is possible for each of them to substitute others for himself as the sustainers of meanings which he misses. In this way all men depend upon one another as the guarantors of meaning which is beyond their individual cognizance.

The existence of fellow mortals, however, limited like ourselves, does no more than push back a little the threat of a universe which, in spite of all advances in human knowledge, is still mostly chaos and the unknown. In the last resort, therefore, there is no theoretical justification for the unconditional claim which we all make for ourselves to the right of being considered persons, unless there exists a person not limited as we are, but commensurate, as a subject, with the ordered totality of nature, and capable, through our trust in him, of vicariously fulfilling for us the condition upon which our claim to personality depends. That such a person exists is of course

not universally acknowledged, but upon no other presupposition have we the right to arrogate to ourselves the characters we do. That we do actually assume the rights of persons, and that the whole practical life of man is based on the assumption, is a matter of fact. Man's practical belief in his personality and in his right to organize his life upon a personal basis implies, whether he knows it or not, the existence of a personal God.

*The Argument from the Relation of Subjects  
to Subjects*

In defining the concept 'person,' stress has been laid upon the element of consciousness, and upon the fact that the objects of consciousness must constitute an orderly system of meanings. But this still falls far short of the whole truth. If this were all, man would be no more than an embodied intelligence, a subject contemplating objects. But we know that the intelligent apprehension of an objective world is only one phase in the totality of personal experience. Behind the intelligence are the instincts, with all that they imply ; and the cognitive function, as we have seen, is only one ingredient in instinct.

Now the most significant of the relations into which man, as a creature of instinct, can enter, are relations which directly or indirectly imply the existence of persons. Many of the fundamental instincts are social or anti-social. Persons could not be what they are apart from the existence of others. A solitary personality is a psycho-physical impossibility. Just as, when we consider man's personality as determined by his consciousness of objects, the

underlying condition is that these objects, as he knows them, should constitute an orderly system of meanings, so when we consider personality as determined by the possibility of personal relations, the underlying condition is that man should realize his own nature as a person by relating himself as a subject to other persons as subjects. And again, just as the objective world is never actually presented to man's consciousness as a completely ordered system, so here also man finds himself baffled in his attempt to sustain his character as a person by the fact that he never really succeeds in relating himself to persons as such—that is to say, as subjects. In our intercourse with our fellows there is always something which eludes us. They have secrets in their nature which neither we nor even they themselves are able to penetrate ; and so far as this is the case, persons exist for us, not as persons or subjects, but as mysterious objects. To the extent to which we fail to relate our inner nature, our inner experience, to the inner nature and experience of others, to that extent we do not succeed in establishing genuinely personal relations, and consequently we fall short of personality ourselves.

When confronted with a similar difficulty in the case of our relations, as conscious beings, with a world of objects, we found that the solution implied the existence of a conscious being commensurate with the system of nature, considered as an ordered whole. Is there any such solution here ? Clearly the logical requirements of the case will be met if there exists a person capable of sustaining for us vicariously the burden of those personal relations which we are able only in a very halting and inadequate way

to sustain for ourselves. This supposition implies (1) that such a being exists, and (2) that we are able to place ourselves in a specific personal relation to him in such a way that we entrust to him a function which we can conceive, but cannot execute. The function in question is that of *knowing*<sup>1</sup> all persons as subjects.

That such a person exists cannot be demonstrated mathematically. If, however, we claim for ourselves that we are persons in the fullest sense of the term, our claim can be supported only on this assumption. We have no right to believe that we are persons unless we are prepared to admit, as the ground of our right, the existence of a personal God.

### *Objections to the Argument as thus stated*

To the argument certain objections will no doubt be at once raised. Of these the most formidable are the following. On what ground, it will be asked, have we any right to assume that our claim to personality presupposes a completely ordered universe? Is it not a matter of *personal* experience that such a thing as disorder is both possible and actual? And does not this fact, so far from detracting from our personality, contribute to the sum of conditions which, by throwing out continual challenges and provoking sustained conflicts with the refractory forces of nature, serve both to define and to establish personal existence? Is it not among the distinguishing characteristics of persons to be forever on the offensive? Furthermore,

<sup>1</sup> For the conception of God as *knower* in this sense *vide*, e.g. Matthew xi, 27; Luke x, 22; xvi, 15; John x, 14-15; Acts xv, 8, 18; 1 Corinthians xiii, 12, etc.

how can it be maintained that the possibility of personal relations among men implies a profound knowledge of one person by another, an intimate subtlety of insight directed subjectively to the inwardness of another person's experience, when, as a matter of fact, our experience is all to the contrary? There are probably persons who have never attained to such intimacy with any human soul; and at the best the number of persons with whom one can hope to attain any considerable degree of intimacy is bound to be limited. In any case (and this is an objection that applies equally to the two branches of the argument) the ideal conditions laid down as presupposed in our right to consider ourselves persons can never be realized under the limitations of a temporal existence. Even if the world, so far as our knowledge of it extends, were a perfectly ordered system, even if in all our personal contacts we found ourselves engaged with natures that lay open and transparent to our interpretative insight, what of that part of cosmic history which is still to run? What of the unborn generations of men? Does not the very fact that the world, even if a cosmos, is at any rate *unfinished*, carry with it all the implications which threaten personality on the assumption that it is a chaos? And is not the only reasonable inference that personal existence is but a product of the blind operation of natural forces, something very real so far as it goes, very precious if we find it so, something to be thankful for, yet establishing no claims upon the cosmos, and no rights? Finally, reverting to the argument from the relations of subject to subject, is it not preposterous to maintain that our right to consider ourselves persons depends in some ideal sense upon

our knowledge of other selves, when as a matter of fact it is freely recognized that no man can have such knowledge even of himself?

### *A Preliminary Reply to Objections*

To attempt a detailed answer to these questions would be a futile undertaking. They stand or fall together, and if they can be met at all, it can only be by an argument which will show that the point of view from which they are conceived is a mistaken point of view. But before proceeding to deal with the issue in this broad fashion, let me say that nothing could be further from my intention (or indeed from the general purport of the argument) than to suggest that there is no such thing as disorder, real or apparent, in the world, or that a complete penetration by one subject into the inner life of another is either possible or desirable. It is a fact of experience, as well authenticated, perhaps, as most facts, that the world is not all order. But it is also a fact of experience that much of the disorder in it is intelligible disorder. It has its source in causes that are frequently ascertainable and sometimes remediable, and in every case, in so far as it reveals itself *as disorder*, it relates itself to the system of an ordered experience in a way that invests chaos itself with a certain significance. Even when the world around us is most an enigma, it is a fact of profound significance for *us* that it is so. There are ways of adjusting oneself intelligently to enigmas. In the world of our personal relations, too, it is something to be able to see (as we do see) that the peculiarities of character and disposition that divide us from our neighbours are eccentricities of

*personality*. Even when we fail most completely to understand, we in a sense understand why it is that we fail. As for our confessed inability to know ourselves, the assumption is that what we fail to grasp is the deeper and subtler *personality* within us, which is hardly altogether unknown, since it is not altogether undivined.

The way in which to meet the objections raised is, however, not to show in what way they may be qualified. Such qualification at the best will carry us only a short distance. We must therefore proceed by another method. This will involve that final analysis of experience and its conditions which was promised in the last chapter.

### *A Reply based on a Final Analysis of Experience*

I shall assume that there is no need to prove that personal relations exist. They are as much a part of our experience as anything else. Our business therefore will be not to prove, but to analyse and define such relations.

First, then, let us ask : What is it to which we relate ourselves when we relate ourselves to another person as such ? The only possible answer is : An experience-bearing self. All my experience of personal relations rests on the assumption (which is itself a revelation of experience) that there exist not only objects and appearances, but systems of experience which are not the system of my private experience. It is to these that I address myself as often as I enter into *personal* relations with other persons.

The argument now centres upon this most

significant of all facts—the plurality of experience ; and the question with which we have to deal is the question as to the relation between the system of experience which we attribute to one person and that which we attribute to another. In the first place no two systems are identical or can ever be made absolutely to coincide. This is obvious in the case of human subjects. Two persons may live together on terms of the closest intimacy, the deepest sympathy : they may pass together by successive phases through what we call in the abstract ‘ the same experience ’. And yet no single item in that experience is the same for the two of them. When viewing an identical landscape side by side, through eyes that have been trained to look for the same things, through the medium of two sensibilities that have long responded in the same measured rhythm to similar stimulation, they are each of them confined to an experience which is absolutely and inalienably his own. They can no more exchange the subjectivity of their private experience than their bodies can occupy the same portion of space. So far as the mere mechanics of the experience are concerned (the most superficial thing about it) they are compelled by the conditions of their physical nature to see the world of visible objects in such a way that when they view it from the same position, they do so at different times, and when they do it at the same time, they do so from slightly different positions. Experience, as it actually occurs, is characterized by a profound and unalterable privacy—the privacy with which it is given to each individual as altogether his own.

*The Objectivity of Experience Conditioned by the Plurality and Sociality of Experiencing Selves*

But while this is so (and perhaps for this very reason) there is another side to the question. It is not more characteristic of experience to be given in the inviolable privacy of the individual's subjectivity than it is for the individual subject to seek the meaning of his experience in an experience other than his own. Thus the process whereby the independently real becomes known to us as the actually existing objective counterpart of its own transformable appearances, is a process which is rendered possible for each man by the experiences of his fellows. The whole business of acquiring experience is transacted in a social environment, and the constituent elements in a social environment are the experiences of persons living together in a single universe and communicating with one another. We have seen that the so-called *data* are not really given, but are guaranteed as the result of repeated adjustments to environment on the part of the psycho-physical organism. But the act of adjusting ourselves to the world around us is at the same time an act of adjusting ourselves to other people's experiences of the world. In this aspect experience is largely imitative : it is developed upon models supplied to us by our observation of the attitudes and reactions of those to whom we look chiefly for instruction and direction in the art of living. As we proceed with the work, we become aware that we are repeating within the privacy of our personal consciousness a history which, in its main features, has been enacted many times before,

and is being enacted afresh with each generation of mankind. The sense of this is a great stabilizer. I learn to trust my experience when I learn to view it as the analogue of other men's experience. More and more, as I develop, it becomes the subjective announcement to me of things and of truths which I know to be objective, because I know that they have been announced and are being announced in the same way to others. I come to realize that while my experience is altogether my own, its objects and its meanings are by no means peculiar to me. Thus a plurality of experiences, trans-subjectively communicated, becomes the condition whereby the experience of each man acquires its objective meanings. Or, we might say, the experience of others is an objectifier and guarantor of each man's private experience. In the more advanced stages of development, for example in scientific research or in the active work of organizing man's political and economic life, experience is a vast cooperative enterprise, wherein there is room for many differences and much conflict. But even here the universal presupposition is a community of experience.

Keeping these facts in mind, we must now ask : What light is thrown upon the nature of reality by the experience we have of the world as a spatio-temporal system of events in which we discover the presence of experience-bearing selves? To begin with, we are bound to admit that the presence in it of such a thing as experience is bound to make a difference. In attempting a general characterization, we have no right to omit any known factor. The world as a whole could not be what it is, were the

fact of experience absent from it. The question then is : What difference does it make to the world that it not only exists, but that to some degree at least it is experienced ?

*The Fact that the World not only Exists but is in at least some degree Experienced makes Appearances possible*

On first thoughts it might appear as if it would make no difference whatever, except that of adding certain factors to certain others already in existence. It is one common assumption, and a reasonable assumption, that the independently existing Real is in no way affected by the question whether or not it is an object of observation. A little thought, however, will show that this is not the whole truth. It may well be that the real object does not depend for its existence upon our observation of it, and is in a sense unaffected by the latter ; but it is no less true that if all objects ceased to be experienced, one important consequence would ensue, a consequence sufficiently genuine to affect the nature of reality in a fundamental way. In a word, there would be no appearances. For appearances presuppose the existence not only of a real object, but of observing subjects. Now once more it might at first be thought that the presence or absence of *appearances* can make no difference to the physical world. But, as before, a little further thought will show that this cannot be the case. For appearances have a reality of their own, and that reality is as much objective as it is subjective. They are the appearances *of* the independently Real, and are, therefore, to be considered as *functions* of the latter,

coming into existence successively under the conditions which render it an object of experience. Whatever else may be asserted of the independence of physical objects, this at least may be said with confidence. Nothing in the realm of nature would be *what it is* unless, under the conditions in question, *it appeared as it does*. To produce the appropriate appearance, which is a function of itself, under the appropriate conditions, is therefore a part of the objective nature of the independent Real.

*Reality to be thought in Terms of the ideally complete System of all its functional Appearances : its Existence is Experience revealing one of its Meanings*

But what if the appropriate conditions never occur ? (That they do not *always* occur we may take for granted, as also that the existence of the object does not guarantee the existence of a subject.) Would the independent Real in this case be exactly what it is when, through its appearances, it becomes an object of experience ? This question is obviously unanswerable in the form in which it has been expressed, because it is the kind of question to which, apparently, only experience can furnish a reply, and the experience, in this instance, is *ex hypothesi* absent. But to say so is to brand the question as absurd. It is an instance of what happens when a doctrine—in this case Realism—well grounded on experience, is pushed to a point at which experience can no longer follow it. Realism is here revealed as incompatible with the method which accompanies it, namely, Empiricism. We must therefore try to

reformulate the question consistently with a view of nature based upon our experience of it. In its new form the question will be : What can we know of the independently Real when actual experience of it is not forthcoming ? We can only say that if experience is to be our guide, the nature of the Real, whether experienced or not, must conform to all the conditions through which any Real whatever makes itself known to us in experience. This does not mean that the unknown Real must be *like* the known. But it means that any enlargement of our experience necessary in order to render such a Real an object of actual experience would add itself to the old experience in such a way that together they would constitute a single diversified totality similar to the experience which, without such added knowledge, we actually possess. And this in turn implies that in accordance with all our experience, we must think of the world, so far largely unexplored, and, even where explored, still a loosely integrated system, as the objective content of an experience ideally complete. In other words, we cannot dissociate the thought of what reality is in itself from the thought of what, so far, it reveals itself to be in the system of all its functional appearances. Of course the conditions required to render all possible appearances actual need not be limited to the conditions of human perception. But so long as we take experience as our guide both to the existence and to the nature of the Real (and we have no other guide), the assertion that experience reveals existence must be interpreted in a sense which implies the truth of the further proposition that existence is experience revealing one of its meanings. This is not to say that

to exist is to be experienced.<sup>1</sup> But it is to say that the existence of anything is determined by the same conditions which render it a possible object of experience. Were there no such thing as experience, therefore, we could hardly say that existence is what experience reveals it to be.

It must be obvious by now that experience of existence is a thing which occurs in what we might describe as a series of zones enclosing or enlarging one another. Thus the experience of which the objective content is an appearance, is an organic element in a more comprehensive experience, of which the objective content is the independent Real. But the existence of independent Reals is revealed in an experience more comprehensive still—the experience of the cosmic conditions (among which the existence of other Reals and of many relations must be included) under which any real object exists.

Now so far as the finite subject is concerned, there comes a point at which the actualities of experience are found wanting. They fail to furnish definite contents to the forms under which existence is universally experienced. For example there are spaces and times which are either unknown or very inadequately known. On the other hand there are contents so anomalous that the sense in which they can be said to exist is very much of an enigma. That is to say, our experience of them is unable to tell us whether their existence is merely that of an appearance, and, if so, under what conditions, subjective and objective, they occur. In either case the result is chaos. But

<sup>1</sup> Such an assertion would be true of the existence of the appearances, but it is not the whole even of their existence. For, as we have seen, to exist as an appearance is not only to be observed, but to be a function of an independent Real.

experience has its own methods of dealing with such issues.

*All Human Experience defines itself within the Framework of an Ideally Universal Experience : i.e. Human Experience is an Experience of the Whole*

The discovery that individual human experience is limited (a discovery which is itself an experience) is not something that merely occurs, as events occur, only to give place to other events. It is something that carries with it consequences which cannot be stated or understood without reference to that inner aspect of experience which accompanies all our experience of the outer world. The consciousness of incompleteness and confusion in the world of our objective experience is at the same time a consciousness that we, the subjects of that experience, are limited, and it is the provocation to an activity which has as its object the progressive expansion of our experience to the dimensions of an experience ideally complete. The attainment of such completeness is of course not an end to which the individual aspires. He does not think of it as within his reach. And it is presumably not within the reach even of the co-operative endeavour of mankind. Nevertheless a perfected experience of the universe is the ideal concept within the limits of which all actual experience defines itself as a fragment of a greater whole. All human experience, we may say, delineates itself against a background, or within the framework of an ideal universal experience, as spaces define themselves within one universal space,

and times within one universal time. For the man of science, preoccupied with experience in its objective aspect, this universal experience is no more than a regulative ideal; but the question must be asked whether in view of what has been said as to the relation of experience to existence, we are not compelled to think of the ideal as the completed reality of the actual.

In the first place the ideal, in the sense in which a universal experience is ideal, cannot be a mere fiction or abstraction. It is something of which all our experience is *an actual experience*. In this respect there is something about it analogous to any Real of which we have empirical knowledge. We experience real objects in a series of experiences which, taken piecemeal, are the experiences of its appearances. Yet every experience of an appearance is an experience of the object itself. In the same way we do not experience real objects without experiencing something of the conditions under which they exist. Every experience of a Real is therefore given within the framework of a larger experience. Applying the same reasoning to our experience as a whole, we see that even if, from the conditions of our nature, we never attain to a universal experience, *every experience we have is an experience of all there is*. In a word, human experience, if it is not the whole of experience, is *an experience* of the whole.

Behind these statements is the principle that the real object of all experience is more than the *de facto* content of the experience as such, the experience, that is to say, as it occurs under the limited conditions of space, time and perceptibility. All experience is conditioned; but every conditioned experi-

ence is an experience, if not of the metaphysically unconditioned, at least of all that to which the conditions of experience apply. To say then that experience defines itself within the system of a universal experience is merely to state the fact that whatever experience occurs under such conditions as those of space, time and the laws of physics and psychology, is an experience of all that is conditioned by these forms and laws.<sup>1</sup>

*Recapitulation, leading to a Restatement of the Problem*

Applying these conclusions to experience in its inner aspect, we see that the confused and fragmentary system of contents, which is the individual's experience of the cosmos, is ideally corrected and supplemented for him (not without effort on his own part) by the more massive and more completely organized experience of mankind. This larger experience represents the world as experience has taught him to know it; and in relation to the world as thus known, his fragmentary experience acquires the character of a symbolism and a function. The social processes of experience are the means whereby the real world, which, from the standpoint of the

<sup>1</sup> These statements will doubtless suggest the views of Mr. Bradley and Mr. Bosanquet on the nature of predication—more particularly their principle that the real subject of all propositions is the absolute. This principle however is quite different from that I have attempted to state; and I do not accept the theory of predication which is the very kernel of absolute Idealism. In my opinion it would be a more accurate account of the proposition to say that its primary function is to denote limited systems of truth, in which certain entities and relations define themselves against others and against the ideal whole of truth.

individual's experience of it, is at first an idealization, becomes the real world of his actual experience, while the actual exists only as it acquires ideal meanings.

Now throughout these changes the finite subject retains his personal identity, and the fact that he does so is inseparably connected with the fact that his experience, however varied and disconnected, brings with it the element of ideal continuity, by the same processes whereby it unfolds itself in time. Thus if I wake up in a strange and unknown environment, the experience as it strikes my consciousness at once suggests to my mind certain intermediate events affecting my body, whereby the sudden new experience becomes ideally continuous with the last experience that I can remember. Our experience of conscious selfhood is of such a nature that nothing in its objective content as such can break the continuity of its subjective flow. For me *another* experience is never the experience of another self, but always another experience of the same self; and my experience of subject-selfhood can never be the same thing as another subject's experience of *me*. My experience of the world on its objective side can become the experience of another; but the self-experience which accompanies all my experience of the world can never be the experience of anyone but myself. Likewise the experience of the world attained by other subjects can become my experience of the world; but I can never experience the other selfhood that went with that experience.

To sum up, then, reality as I know it through the experience that is vouchsafed me, consists of (1) a world of objects—appearances and object-selves—

which is never presented to me except as a manifold of partly organized fragments, functioning as the symbolism of an ideally complete experience, and (2) a community of subject-selves, striving together to verify and extend the meaning which their combined experience of the world symbolizes. But if it is asked : What is the meaning of all this ? Wherein does it originate, and whereto does it tend ? there is only one point of view from which the question is either intelligible or in any degree answerable. If the experience of persons, on its inner and its outer side, is to be considered as nothing but a series of events, like the events of nature that constitute its own objective content, the question is meaningless and futile. If, on the other hand, the meaning of experience itself is sought in those aspects which relate it as a quest of meanings to the personalities whose experience it is, and to whom these meanings are revealed, there is still a hope that it may be possible to find some answer to the question.

### *The Twofold Character of Experience*

All the experience that actualizes itself in the lives of finite subjects has a twofold character. It is at once what it means that objects and events should be experienced, and what it means to be the subject of such experience. Of these two aspects the latter is the more comprehensive, since it is impossible to have an experience of objects without experiencing what it is to be a subject, whereas, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> it is possible to experience what it means to be a subject without actually experiencing objects and events. We are

<sup>1</sup> Cf. above, p. 234 *sq.*

therefore compelled to think of experience in its objective aspect as a phenomenal or objective equivalent of experience in its subjective aspect. This is one side of the truth. But there is another side—that which has been brought out in the preceding paragraphs. If, as has been asserted, all finite experience defines itself within a universe of experience more comprehensive than itself, it looks as if we should have to reverse the proposition just stated, and instead of saying that the subjective aspect is more comprehensive than the objective, we should have to say that there exists a whole universe of experience for which there are no available subjects. In other words, there will be objective equivalents of which there is no subjective experience. Now it is obvious that if we are really thinking of experience, such a state of affairs is a sheer impossibility. For objective equivalents which exist by themselves are simply *not experience*. How is this apparent contradiction to be dealt with?

*The whole Logic of the Position points not only to a Universal Experience but to a Universal Subject Creative of its Experience*

One way would be to say that what we have been calling objective equivalents are no parts of any experience except *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*. They are physical facts and events which exist, but are not necessarily experienced. In some cases they become the objective contents of some consciousness ; in some cases they do not. But in either case it makes no difference to the facts and events themselves.

Now of course we have been admitting all along that there are things of which *we* have no actual

experience, and that in all probability there are things which are not the objects of any finite subject. At the same time we have been forced to grant that so far as objects at least are concerned, the nature and existence of the latter cannot be considered independently of the forms (their appearances, for example) which these objects assume when they become the objects of experience. A moment's further thought will show that the same thing must be true of events. For events are inseparable from objects. But if it is the case that all the objects and events of a possible experience are what they are, not indeed because they are experienced by us, but for the same reason for which, when they are experienced, their appearances are what they are, then we see that it is very difficult to think of anything as being what it is, or indeed as being anything at all, except in so far as an experience of it is guaranteed by the same conditions that guarantee its existence.

Furthermore, if we assume that a thing is what it is in the absence of its appearances, and remains precisely what it *was* when its appearances came into existence, we shall have to conclude that the appearances are no part of its nature, but part of the nature of the subject to which they appear. But we know that they are not the appearances of the subject, but of the object. If then it is the presence of the subject that causes the appearances, the natural inference would seem to be that the subject is actually creative of something in the nature of the object. This, however, is a form of Idealism quite opposed to the assumptions in the case we are analysing. The requirements of Realism itself, therefore, compel us to include among the conditions required of the inde-

pendent Real that wherever and whenever it exists, it shall not be deprived of the benefit of being the object of an experience. This proposition expresses a universal principle of existence, and in stating it, I must not be thought to be suggesting a subjectivist interpretation of Reality. I am only stating the fact that the independent Real cannot exist as such apart from certain conditions, and that among these conditions is one that has to do with the question whether it is an object—a *real* object of *experience*. If the conditions were physical, no difficulty would be felt in reconciling the notion of its independence with the notion of its existing under conditions ; and there seems no reason why the additional condition which I have asserted to be necessary should be thought incompatible with independence.

The whole logic of the position would seem, therefore, to point irresistibly to the conclusion that there must exist not only a universal experience, but a universal subject. For experience without a subject is nothing at all. The only remaining question is whether experience itself warrants a belief in any such subject. In answer to this question I should say that if we had no experience of any subject but ourselves, it would be difficult to believe in any other. But there is no fact of experience more certain than the existence of other subjects. And this, which is a *fact* of experience, is only the beginning of a whole world of new experiences, in which persons are engaged not with objects and events in the physical world, but with persons. Through our experience of persons, and through our relations with them we gain access to an interior view of the world in which the relations that bind one thing to another under the

conditions of space, time and physical law are superseded by a new type of relationship, which binds all things to conscious subjects, and conscious subjects to one another.

I must add that an experience which is universal—the experience of a universal person—differs from any finite experience in one fundamental respect. Unlike the latter, which is derived from precedent conditions, and which assumes as its content only what it can discover, the universal experience must be thought of as universally creative. The discoveries of God are His acts of creation.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Dogma of Non-creation*

The difficulties which have led to the practical expulsion of the very notion of creation both from science and from philosophy are the product chiefly of two circumstances: (1) the inveterate propensity to interpret all experience from the standpoint of its objective content, and (2) the equally inveterate tendency to interpret that content from the standpoint of its spatial rather than from that of its temporal character. Granted these two principles of interpretation, the proposition *ex nihilo nihil fit* follows as a general statement of the conditions under which our experience of objects is given.

The principle may be formulated in these terms. Every presented object is a configuration of the contents of space, and comes into existence through a redistribution of the contents of a previous configuration. In the process whereby the first distribu-

<sup>1</sup> We shall see that human experience too has its creative aspect, but it is creative only in a limited sense.

tion becomes the second nothing is added and nothing is lost. It will be seen that this view assumes a very special definition of existence. To exist is to be a content of space ; and the contents of space considered in themselves are always the same.

As soon as the time-factor is taken seriously into account, certain difficulties arise ; for it is a fundamental characteristic of time that no one of its moments is the same as any other. In time everything is new and unprecedented. The difficulty did not arise so long as the time-factor was not allowed to enter into the definition of the existent. This was natural enough, since time appeared to have no content of its own, or to have as its only content the content of space. It was therefore conceived as merely *passing over* the real, without affecting the reality of the latter. Clearly such a conception is no longer adequate to the nature of a universe in which time is seen to be a constituent element. Nevertheless it would be a mistake to regard the recognition of the time-factor as implying any very radical revision of the dogma of non-creation. If nature is a process rather than a substance, it is a process in which all that is new is determined by precedent conditions. Only, these conditions are no longer definable in terms of the content of space as such.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As usual, the logic of the position is well illustrated in the history of Greek philosophy, where one of the most characteristic problems is to explain the undeniable phenomenon of change in a world in which, it is assumed, nothing comes into existence and nothing that exists ceases to be. The solution varies according as the space or the time factor is emphasized. In the one case we have pure mechanism (of which the atomic theory is the most perfect expression), in the other the carefully qualified dynamism of Heraclitus and Aristotle, based upon the recognition of qualitative change. Now qualitative change can be explained only on one of two hypotheses, (1) creation out of

*Creation is a Category of Self-experience*

The point of view which we have attained has, however, rendered this whole way of looking at things inept and almost meaningless. So long as we confine our attention to the objective world of things and events, the world of space-time, the question of creation does not arise except by a confusion of thought; but the moment we relate the spatio-temporal world of objective events to our *experience* of it, and to the experience of *ourselves* that goes with the former, the case is altered. Strictly speaking, creation is a category of inner experience. It is that in any event which derives from the activity of conscious selves. Creative events do not merely *happen*, and in so far as natural events do nothing else, no event of nature is a creative event. Thus, just as from the standpoint of natural knowledge it is necessary to eliminate active verbs and personal pronouns, so from the standpoint of subjective experience, the truth cannot be expressed in any other way than by the use of these rejected forms of speech. Creation is always and only an act of the will, and the object of a creative act is always an object of experience. There is here a double objectification.

nothing and (2) the unalterable identity of that which changes. All solutions are based on a tacit or explicit rejection of the former hypothesis. Thus Aristotle's conception of ἀλλοίωσις assumes that it is only the *states* of substance that change, substance itself remaining what it was. Heraclitus' position is especially illuminating. The radical change whereby one thing actually becomes another (τροπή) is subject to the principle that *all things are one*. That is to say, while the facts of experience compel us to admit that everything changes into its opposite, we can only explain the phenomenon on the assumption that everything *is* what it becomes and that everything that *becomes* is what it was before it became. Thus nothing is created and nothing destroyed.

When an ideal object of the will has become an object of actual experience, by the selfsame process whereby it became the former (or by a process arising out of the former process) an act of creation has been perpetrated; and everything in nature is the product of a creative act in so far as we can relate it, not to its physical antecedents, but to the volition and to the activity of a conscious subject revealed in the inwardness of self-experience.

It is obvious that there are relatively few things in nature which we can thus relate to acts of our own will. Nevertheless that we have experience of creation within narrow limits follows from the fact that we have experience of activity—and more specifically of an activity which terminates in natural events. That we are so slow to acknowledge human creativity as such is due in part to the fact that all human creation is effected under conditions which we do not create for ourselves, but merely discover: <sup>1</sup> in part it is due to our fixed mental habit of relating the objects of our experience to other objects rather than to ourselves and to the experience which we have of them. It is precisely the same tendency which appears in the method of interpretation which would reduce the creative efforts of the artist to the transfer of so much matter from one position in space to another. The artist, we are told, *creates* nothing; he merely rearranges the material he finds ready to hand.

Now without denying the trivial truth contained in such statements, let me point out that they involve an utter failure of the true spirit of empiricism. A

<sup>1</sup> If, indeed, we do discover them. Sometimes they remain unknown to us, like those physiological processes whereby we execute the movements of our bodies.

work of art may be a physical object, and may possess the type of objectivity which is characteristic of such objects. But we do not *experience* it as a mere content of space and time, and the objectivity which the greatest works of art invariably reveal is of a different order from that of nature. In our approach to the latter, we are compelled to discriminate between the object and the experience which brings it home to us. This is possible because the experience in question is specifically that of the detached observer. Art, on the contrary, turns the observed object into an object of aesthetic significance by so manipulating the elements of nature that they become the possibility of a new kind of experience ; and it is characteristic of this new experience that its objects are not detachable from itself. This does not mean that art is purely subjective. The beauty and expression at which the poet and the painter aim, are not the beauty and expressiveness of our feelings. They are the beauty and expressiveness of the object presented, but, as such, they are *experienced* beauty and expressiveness. What the artist creates is, therefore, a possibility of experience ; and he is able to do so because he has first of all himself *experienced* the possibility. The creativity of his work consists precisely in this, that by his active endeavour he turns an experienced possibility into an actuality of experience—an actuality which otherwise could never have been realized.

### *The World the Divine Creation*

God's experience is creative in the same sense. That is to say, it is the creation of experience through

an experience of the possibilities of creation. But the creative experience of the divine being has certain features peculiarly its own. Human creativity is preceded and conditioned by man's experience of an actual world which he did not create. He adds to 'creation', in the cosmic sense, creations of his own, and he does so upon hints supplied from the former. In this sense all art, as Plato and Aristotle maintained, is imitative—although it is much more than *imitation* in the ordinary sense of the word. But the universal experience of God knows no such distinctions as we are compelled to acknowledge in the experience of men. Rather it is creative through and through. We must not think of the world as conditioning God's experience of it, but of God's experience as conditioning the existence of the world. That is to say, when we think of the world as existing, we must think of it as a content of God's experience, and we must think of God's experience of its existence as dependent upon His experience of its possibility. In this sense the world is the divine creation.

This may seem a highly abstract and unreal way of representing the divine creative activity. But if so, the reason is to be found in the failure to grasp the fact that the *possibility* in question is not the abstract concept of possibility. I am not maintaining, upon theoretical grounds, the identity of possibility and being. The possibility with which we are dealing is an actuality of God's *experience*: it is an actual experience (analogous to the artist's) of the possibilities of creation, and is distinct from the experience which it calls into being. To experience the possibility of existence is thus one thing; to experience the actuality is another. And in order to give the

conception of creative experience the concreteness required to render it convincing and real, we have only to think how the artist's experience of certain possibilities leads of its own accord to certain further actualities of experience.

But, it will be objected, the difficulty is just here. God's creative experience cannot possibly be like that of the artist; for while it is easy, or at least possible, to understand how the artist creates a work of aesthetic value from material supplied to him, God's supposed creative activity is specifically directed to the creation of the material. The creation of material, however, is utterly unthinkable. For such a notion leads inevitably to the question: Out of what—*something* or *nothing*—did God create the matter of which the world consists? If out of *something*, then He did not, strictly speaking, create it at all; and to talk of creating the material world out of *nothing* is to use a meaningless form of words.

To all of which a hearty assent may, without hesitation, be accorded. Only, it must be added, the meaninglessness derives from the question itself and more particularly from the assumption that creation (if it is allowed) must be creation *out of*. Underlying this assumption, in turn, is an illicit disjunction. It is taken for granted that if God created the world, and did not create it out of *something*, He must have created it out of *nothing*. The idea with which we are left is that of a sudden and entirely inexplicable transition from physical non-being to physical being—a transition which finds no support in our experience of nature (although, to be sure, our experience of nature cannot prove its theoretical impossibility). No such transition is, however, implied in

the rejection of the alternative suggestion of a creation out of already existing material. The meaning of creation is not to be found by relating a content of experience, such as the physical world, to any previous content, but by relating any content whatsoever to the experience of which it is the content. If God did not create the world out of a pre-existent store of formless matter, the alternative is not that He must have created it out of mere nothingness and vacuity, but only that He *did not create it* (quite a different proposition) *out of anything*. This is but another way of saying that the meaning of the words 'out of' is no part of the meaning of divine creation. From beginning to end we must think of creation in terms of experience. That experience creates experience is a fact of which experience itself is the guarantee. And if the existence of a physical world is included in God's eternal experience of what is possible, there is no theoretical difficulty in thinking of the existing world as the objective equivalent of that divine experience which follows by creative action from the actual experience of its possibility.

*The Creation of Subject-selves the Supreme  
Possibility of Divine Experience*

The importance attached by the Fathers of the infant Church to the doctrine of creation is an example of the singular insight of these early exponents and defenders of Christianity. Although the religion of Jesus, as a religion of simple trust in a divine Father, a religion of simple men and women, does not emphasize the need of a cosmology, nevertheless the belief in a personal God implies, as part

of its theoretical justification, an act of the mind directed to our knowledge of the world as a whole—an act whereby our experience of nature is introverted, and becomes an experience of the divine Creator. The personal approach to God must rest, like the approach to any person, upon the conception of His nature as an experience-bearing self. It is to God's experience that we must address ourselves when we approach Him through the experiences of religion. From this point of view the nature of God may be expressed in terms of an experience which, because it is universal, carries with it the totality of all its transformations, whether these have to do with the relation of appearances to one another and to the independent Real, or with the relation of the inner and outer aspects of experience itself. But above all, the experience of God culminates where human experience culminates, in the experience of those human beings that render experience itself possible, subject-selves. The creation of subject-selves is the supreme possibility of the divine creative experience.

Here again we have a fundamental idea of Christianity—the idea of God's need of man, with all that this implies as to the possibilities of experience for man himself. The supreme act of introversion is an experience of what human life becomes when viewed in the light of this truth.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

OUR labours now draw rapidly to a close ; for we are approaching those revelations of experience where the generalizing efforts of the theoretical reason fade into insignificance. But I have still to establish one connecting link in the argument. In the last chapter it was pointed out that man's hope of immortality follows from the personal nature of God, and from the possibility of personal relations with Him. The connection may be shown as follows.

*The Supreme Possibility of Human Experience, that it can be viewed from the Standpoint of the Divine Experience itself*

Life, as we have seen, from the religious point of view, implies existence where existence is one with the experience of it. But the experience of existence varies in comprehensiveness, from the first faint flickerings of awareness, to a consciousness which has as its content the experience of life itself. There remains that supreme possibility of experience, to which reference has just been made, the experience of what life becomes for us when we realize that it and we are the content and product of God's creative energy. To experience life when life means *this* is to realize that we are co-partners with the divine

being in the active business of living, which is the creation of experience. Life in this sense is conditioned by insight : it is an *act of knowledge*. And such is precisely the Christian definition of the life eternal. " And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." <sup>1</sup>

The full significance of man's knowledge of God cannot be seen until we view it from the standpoint of the divine experience itself. God is the all-knower. His creative experience is the explanation of all that is. The created universe is the content of an experience of what is possible, transforming itself into the experience of what is actual. But there is one possibility of experience which God cannot realize of His own unaided power : there is one divine experience of what is possible, which demands as a condition of its actualization an experience other than God's own. This one experience which has to be created for God is the experience of being known and acknowledged by other subjects.

The knowledge of God is a vast enterprise of experience, an enterprise in which the finite subject and the divine person must conspire together. Herein lies man's hope of immortality. To believe in the life eternal is to believe that the experience whereby the finite subject knows the Divine is of value to God as an experience of His own, and that what is of value to God will be conserved. It is to view all things from another standpoint, to see that all experience short of the supreme experience is but scaffolding, and instrumental to the latter. When this point of view is reached the things of time and

<sup>1</sup> John xvii, 3.

sense, although they lose neither their *existence* nor their *meaning*, become the *minor meanings of existence*. And it is unthinkable that the existence which is the meaning of experience, when experience means most, should pass away into the form of existence which is the least of the meanings of experience, that the life of the subject that supplies to God the experience of being known should vanish in the physical and chemical elements of the body.

To realize the life eternal under the conditions of terrestrial existence is to realize that the life and death of the body are minor episodes in an experience which defines itself as the knowledge of God. That men should die becomes a destiny to which they can look forward with confident hope because they may feel assured that the death of those who know God is but a stage in the process whereby God conserves (and perhaps promotes) that knowledge of Himself which is equally of value to Him and to them. But it is of God and not of himself that he who knows God thinks. Upon the knowledge of God he concentrates all the powers of his nature, cognitive and active alike. As for life and death, he leaves these to a power beyond his own. And thus religion, which begins in a preoccupation with life, ends in a complete indifference to death. Death is a matter of indifference because it is seen to have become irrelevant to the deeper meanings of life—because, in other words, from the standpoint of a personal relationship with the divine being, sustained by mutual recognition and understanding, the relationship of life and death has ceased to be antithetical. Of this we have positive testimony in the experience of those who, like the Apostle to the

Gentiles, have seen deepest into the meaning of experience, and who, with him, can say out of their knowledge of that higher life :

“ For I am persuaded, that neither *death*, nor *life*, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

*A sustained Act of Reverence the Supreme  
Objectifier of Human Experience*

And here we might well be content to conclude ; for we have long been straining the fabric of a purely philosophical inquiry. There are truths to which reasoning and analysis are the only key ; but there are truths which are revelations of experience itself ; and philosophy can never hope to take the place of experience. There is, however, one imputation from which I am particularly anxious to defend the view I have been advocating throughout this volume—the imputation of *subjectivity* in the sense in which this word is ordinarily understood. While it is true that the discovery of God is an inner experience of the *self*, and begins in a unique movement of self-consciousness, the practical outcome is an equally unique self-forgetfulness, sustained by a lifelong pre-occupation with *other selves*. In this Christianity is the most completely objective of all possible attitudes to life, and it is so for the following reason.

There is only one thing that can purge human

<sup>1</sup> Romans viii, 38-39.

nature thoroughly of the disease of subjectivity, and that is the discovery of an object, not of interest merely, not of scientific or aesthetic preoccupation, but of *reverence*. Reverence is the supreme objectifier of human experience ; and the only possible object of reverence is a person. In the world of nature, objectively considered, there is no single content to which we can relate ourselves as we relate ourselves to the *subjects* of experience. What we encounter there is merely an *object*, or a system of objects ; and while objects may impress us with their beauty and majesty, while they may strike us as sublime and awe-inspiring, yet so long as they are merely our *objects*, we feel that there is something in us that is not in them, something that more than neutralizes their physical superiority over us. In them there is less of the essential stuff of experience than in ourselves ; and if existence is experience revealing one of its meanings, they cannot be said to exist as we exist.

Above all, they are deficient in the power to create value. Not that value is a subjective thing. The beauty of a mountain or a wave is *its* beauty and not the beauty of our feelings ; but, as has been pointed out, beauty is nothing apart from our experience of it. It is something that exists in the object, but as an object of experience. Hence it is the presence in the world of subject-selves that enables beautiful objects to realize the beauty that is *theirs*. The same thing is true of that other form of value which we call utility. Thus the objective world enters the category of value through the fact that subject-selves exist. Metaphysically speaking, subjects are the source from which all values derive their *validity*.

For this very reason the existence of a subject is unconditionally valuable. This is an abstract way of saying that in the sight of God all souls are precious. It is a realization of this truth that is at the bottom of the unique attitude which we call reverence.

Behind the diseased subjectivity of modern art and modern life is a failure to grasp the meaning and implications of personality. An unobjectified experience is the crowning calamity of life ; and the world of to-day is full of unobjectified experience. It is not that objects are wanting, or a preoccupation with objects, even in the most subjective forms of art. But the objects are such as result from an experience that has been deliberately secluded from the objectifying influence of adequate social judgments. They represent the fantastic and disordered thing the objective world of nature becomes when the individual tries to be alone with it, refusing to respect the experience of his fellows and to acknowledge a divine experience. In this way the neurotic solitary, having lost touch with man and God, loses touch with nature too.

The world of subject-selves is an *objective* world ; but it becomes so for the individual only through the unique possibility of subjective experience which we call ' regard ', and, in its extreme forms, ' respect ' and ' reverence '. Christianity, on its practical side, is a life based upon regard for others. Its theoretical and practical postulate is a sustained act of reverence for the divine Person.

# INDEX OF PROPER NAMES

- Acts, ii. 401 n.  
 Adamson, R., ii. 298 n.  
 Aeschylus, i. 214 ; ii. 24-5  
 d'Alembert, i. 32  
 Alexander, S., ii. 202, 240 n.  
 Allen, ii. 21 n.  
 Anaximander, i. 157, 159  
 Anaximenes, i. 359 n.  
 Aristotle, i. 57, 63-6, 67 n., 68 n.,  
     69, 72, 153-4, 157-8, 178 n., 213,  
     342 ; ii. 26-9, 83-5, 84 n., 174-6,  
     187, 345-6, 347 n., 421 n., 425  
 Athenagoras, i. 267  
  
 Bacon, F., i. 60  
 Bergson, i. 161, 161 n. ; ii. 296,  
     347 n.  
 Berkeley, i. 333, 341, 351-2,  
     353 n. ; ii. 387  
 Bosanquet, ii. 414 n.  
 Bradley, ii. 414 n.  
 Breasted, i. 87 n.  
 Brinton, D. G., i. 106, 107 n.  
 Broad, C. D., i. 14, 338 n. ; ii.  
     195 n., 197 n., 259-62, 262 n.  
 Broughton, i. 57 n.  
 Bruno, Giordano, i. 107  
 Buckle, i. 378, 380  
 Budge, i. 216 n., 266 n. ; ii. 49 n.  
 Burnet, J., i. 381, 383 n., 387 n. ;  
     ii. 178  
 Butcher and Lang, i. 175 n.  
  
 Callicles, i. 38  
 Carpenter, i. 57 n., 272 n.  
 Castren, i. 107 n.  
 Charles, R. H., i. 292 n., 294, 298  
 Cheyne, i. 304 n.  
 Christ, i. 81, 276 ; ii. 430  
 2 Chronicles, i. 296 n.  
 Clausewitz, i. 128  
  
 Clement of Alexandria, i. 268  
 Codrington, i. 261 n.  
 Confucius, ii. 31, 33  
 Conklin, E. G., ii. 369 n., 373  
 1 Corinthians, i. 226 n. ; ii. 377 n.,  
     401 n.  
 Cowell, i. 365 n.  
  
 Daniel, i. 268 n., 303 n.  
 Dasgupta, Surendranath, i. 287 n.  
 Davidson, A. B., i. 303 n., 304 n.  
 Dawson, i. 119 n.  
 Democritus, i. 157 ; ii. 176  
 Descartes, i. 189, 341-2 ; ii. 199  
 Deussen, i. 177 n., 344-7 n., 350,  
     352 n., 359 n., 362, 366 n., 367 n.,  
     369 n., 370 n., 372 n., 374 n.,  
     376 n., 383 n., 385 n., 390 n.,  
     395 n., 399 n., 400 n., 422 n.  
 Deuteronomy, i. 268 n.  
 Dewey, J., ii. 230 n.  
 Diderot, i. 32, 39  
 Diels, H., i. 381 n.  
 Diognetus, ii. 149  
 Driver, i. 297 n., 299 n., 303 n. ;  
     ii. 15 n.  
 Durkheim, Émile, i. 35 n., 36 n.,  
     45-6, 55 n., 78 n., 84-5 n., 87 n.,  
     103 n., 113 n., 118 n., 119-23,  
     127-9, 131-6, 143, 162 n., 166-8,  
     180, 182, 225 n., 261  
  
 Ecclesiastes, i. 299, 300-302, 309-  
     310, 312  
 Epicharmus, i. 272 n.  
 Epicurus, i. 169  
 Erman, ii. 26 n.  
 Exodus, i. 268 n.  
 Eylmann, i. 119 n.  
 Ezekiel, i. 292, 293 n., 299 n.,  
     303 n., 310

- Fischer, Kuno, i. 269 n.  
 Frazer, Sir J. G., i. 98-9, 103 n.,  
 213 n.  
 Freud, i. 144 n.
- Galatians, i. 226 n.  
 Gomperz, ii. 23 n.  
 Green, T. H., ii. 341  
 Gressmann, ii. 20 n.  
 Grimble, A., i. 186 n.  
 Grote, ii. 193 n.
- Hamilton, Sir Wm., i. 68 n.  
 Harnack, i. 53 n.  
 Harrison, Jane, i. 46 n., 47 n.,  
 113 n., 201 n., 213 n., 217, 219,  
 222 n., 225 n., 226, 255 n., 270,  
 272  
 Harvey, J. W., i. 228 n.  
 Hegel, i. 14, 56 n., 57-8, 79 n., 80,  
 158, 189, 351, 378; ii. 53, 246,  
 350, 392  
 Heine, i. 212 n.  
 Heraclitus, i. 159, 161 n., 162 n.;  
 ii. 179, 193-4, 421 n., 422 n.  
 Hesiod, i. 149, 150 n.  
 Hezekiah, i. 296  
 Hippolytus, i. 51 n., 269  
 Hocart, A. M., i. 184 n., 185 n.  
 Hocking, W. E., ii. 135, 161 n.,  
 230 n.  
 Holtzmann, ii. 21 n.  
 Homer, i. 149  
 Howitt, i. 99 n., 103 n., 113-14,  
 115, 116 n., 118 n., 136  
 von Hugel, i. 57 n.  
 Hume, David, i. 145; ii. 254-5,  
 260-62, 387  
 Hume, R. E., i. 343 n., 344-7 n.,  
 352 n., 353 n., 360 n., 367 n.,  
 369 n., 372 n., 374-6 n., 383 n.,  
 391 n., 395 n., 397 n., 399 n.,  
 400 n., 422 n., 423 n.  
 Huxley, T. H., i. 39
- Irenaeus, i. 268; ii. 53 n., 55 n.,  
 56 n., 57
- Isaiah, i. 296-7 n.
- James, Wm., i. 40, 78, 79; ii. 151,  
 255  
 Jastrow, Morris, i. 303-4 n., 304,  
 305, 308 n.  
 Jehudah, Rabbi, ii. 16  
 Jennings, ii. 32 n., 33 n.  
 Jennings, H. S., ii. 375 n.  
 Jeremiah, i. 297  
 Jevons, i. 68 n.  
 Job, i. 299, 302-14, 316-17;  
 ii. 157  
 Jourdain, P. E. B., i. 6 n.  
 Jung, ii. 334 n.  
 Justin Martyr, i. 267
- Kant, i. 88-9; ii. 246-7, 298 n.  
 Klostermann, ii. 20 n.  
 Knabenhaus, i. 166 n., 256 n.
- Lactantius, i. 231  
 Lang, Andrew, i. 110, 116, 118,  
 175 n.  
 Legge, ii. 32 n., 33 n.  
 Leibniz, ii. 53, 199, 200  
 Leviticus, i. 222 n., 268 n.  
 Lévy-Bruhl, i. 55 n., 177 n.,  
 178 n., 179 n., 209, 211, 261 n.  
 Lietzmann, ii. 20 n., 21 n.
- Locke, i. 27 n., 57, 337 n., 339,  
 340, 341, 393; ii. 204, 213 n.,  
 378 n.
- Macdonald, D. B., i. 264 n.  
 Marcus Aurelius, ii. 149 n.  
 Marett, R. R., i. 84 n., 100 n.,  
 378 n.  
 Maspero, ii. 49 n.  
 McDougall, i. 193; ii. 229, 230  
 Mendelssohn, Moses, i. 32  
 Mendelssohn, Nicolai, i. 32  
 Menzies, S., i. 108 n.  
 Metrodorus, ii. 23  
 Meyer, Eduard, ii. 47

- Mill, J. S., i. 39, 360  
 More, P. E., i. 52 n.  
 Muller, Max, i. 122 n., 177 n.,  
 344 n., 345 n., 347 n., 350, 353 n.,  
 357 n., 360 n., 365 n., 370 n.,  
 374 n., 383-4 n.  
 Murray, Gilbert, i. 113 n.
- Natorp, i. 153  
 Newman, i. 52  
 Noah, i. 303 n.  
 Nunn, Percy, ii. 218 n.
- Oldenberg, i. 386 n., 395 n  
 Origen, i. 268  
 Otto, R., i. 228-41, 249
- Parker, Langloh, i. 99 n., 103 n.,  
 114 n., 115-17 n., 119 n.  
 Parmenides, i. 380-90, 392, 396 ;  
 ii. 177-9, 193  
 Pascal, ii. 91  
 Pauthier, M. G., ii. 32 n., 33 n.  
 Peano, i. 6  
 Pearl, Raymond, ii. 370-74 n.  
 Perry, W. J., i. 262 n.  
 Pfeiderer, Otto, i. 108-10  
 Philippians, ii. 147 n.  
 Plato, i. 145, 151, 153-5, 158, 178,  
 342, 397 ; ii. 24-7, 31, 80-85,  
 113, 177, 217 n., 425  
 Proverbs, i. 297  
 Psalms, i. 297 ; ii. 46 n., 313
- Radhakrishnan, S., i. 286 n.  
 Rapaport, ii. 17 n.  
 Revelation, i. 268 n.  
 Ritter, W. E., ii. 283 n.  
 Rivers, W. H. R., i. 98 n., 166 n.,  
 177 n., 195 n.  
 Rodkinson, ii. 18 n.  
 Rohde, i. 111-13 n., 176 n., 177 n.,  
 251 n.  
 Romans, ii. 333 n., 432 n.  
 Rouse, W. H. D., i. 111 n., 112 n.,  
 118 n.
- Rousseau, i. 32  
 Royce, i. 413 n.  
 Russell, B., i. 9, 11, 14, 61-7,  
 69 n., 128, ii. 196 n., 255,  
 353 n.  
 St. Augustine, i. 37 n., 267-8, 286,  
 294 ; ii. 48 n., 49-50, 154 n.  
 St. John, ii. 150 n., 401 n., 430 n.  
 St. Luke, ii. 20 n., 153 n., 401 n.  
 St. Matthew, ii. 20 n., 150 n.,  
 155 n., 401 n.  
 St. Paul, i. 172 n., 226, 276 ;  
 ii. 147, 378 n.  
 Sankara, i. 350  
 Schleiermacher, i. 230  
 Schopenhauer, i. 189 ; ii. 298 n.  
 Schweitzer, A., i. 195 n.  
 Schwenn, Fr., i. 222 n.  
 Sextus Empiricus, i. 52, 145  
 Shakespeare, i., 149, 304  
 Shelley, i. 149  
 Smith, Foster, i. 30 n.  
 Smith, N. Kemp, ii. 228 n.,  
 247 n., 298 n.  
 Smith, Robertson, i. 223 n.,  
 225 n. ; ii. 13 n., 19  
 Socrates, i. 38, 48, ii. 25, 26 n., 80,  
 82  
 Soderblom, N., i. 251 n.  
 Spencer, Herbert, i. 39  
 Spencer and Gillen, i. 103 n.,  
 113-14 n., 117-18 n., 177 n.  
 Spinoza, i. 107, 189 ; ii. 392  
 Stillington, ii. 378 n.  
 Suarez, ii. 16
- Tannery, P., ii. 193 n.  
 Tertullian, ii. 56 n.  
 Thrasymachus, i. 38  
 Thucydides, i. 30  
 Tiele, C. P., i. 195 n.  
 Tolstoy, i. 27-8, 225 n., 29 8n. ;  
 ii. 154 n.  
 Tylor, E. B., i. 35 n., 98, 100, 104-  
 123, 139, 144-50, 180

## INDEX

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| Upanishads, i. 172 n., 177 n.,<br>343-7, 348-76, 380-400, 413 | Whitehead, i. 140 n. ; ii. 197 n.,<br>201-3, 307 n., 395 |
| Voltaire, i. 32, 39, 55, 75 n., 78-9                          | Wolfe, i. 175 n.   |
| de Vries, H., i. 234  | Xenophanes, ii. 24                                       |
| Wallace, W., i. 56 n.   |  |

THE END